

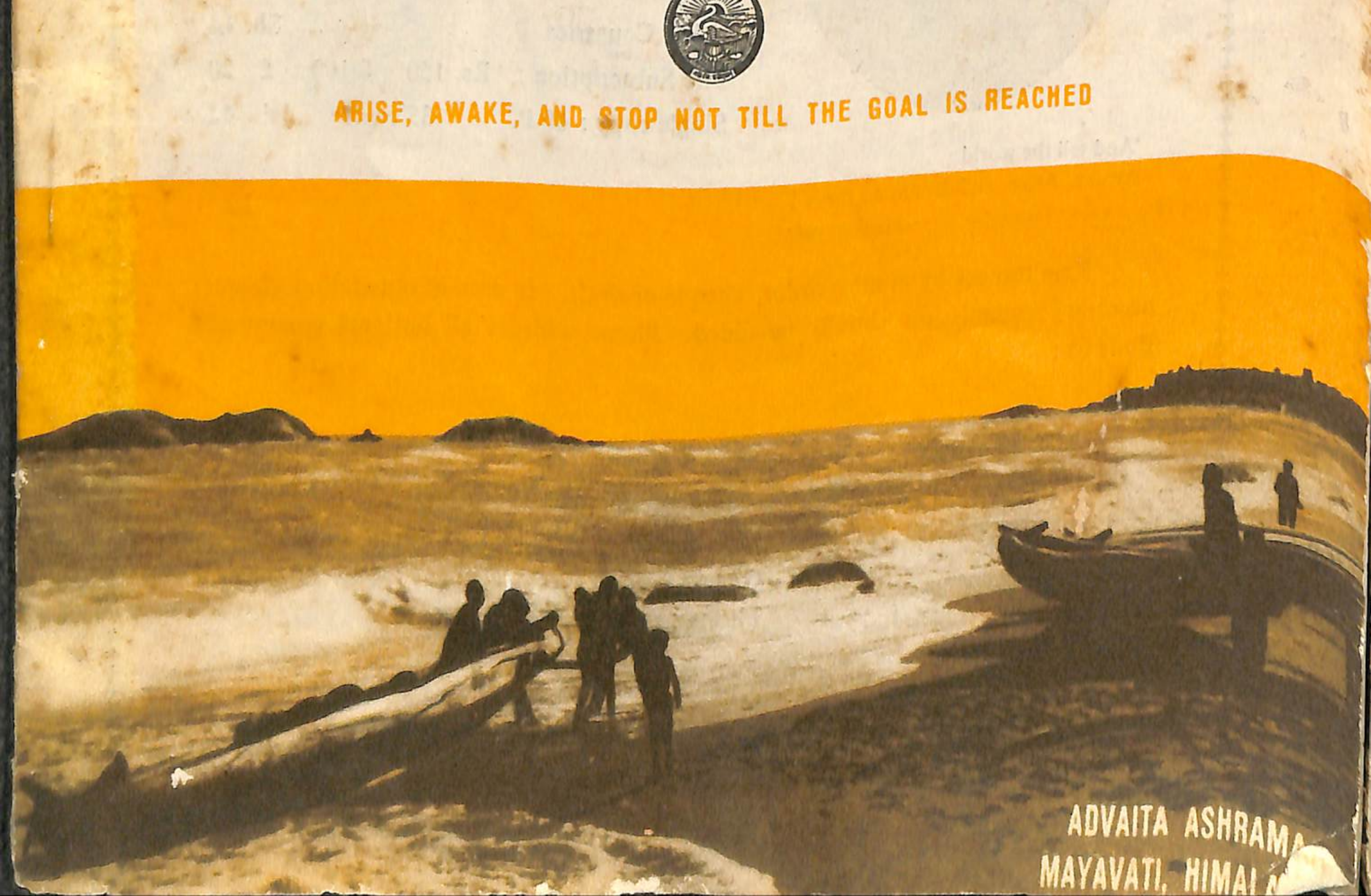
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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

ARISE, AWAKE, AND STOP NOT TILL THE GOAL IS REACHED



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MAYAVATI, HIMAL

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Prabuddha Bharata

VOL. LXXVI APRIL 1971 No. 4

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA ANSWERS

Question (asked by Manilal): 'Sir, where shall I meditate on God when I perform my daily worship ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Why, the heart is a splendid place. Medidate on God there.'

Question (asked by Mr. Choudhury): 'Sir, is it not possible to have the vision of God without the help of a guru ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Satchidananda Himself is the Guru. At the end of the savasadhana[1], just when the vision of the Ishta (chosen deity) is about to take place, the guru appears before the aspirant and says to him, "Behold! There is your Ishta." Saying this, the guru merges in the Ishta. He who is the guru is also the Ishta. The guru is the thread that leads to God. Women perform a ritualistic worship known as the "Ananta-vrata", the object of worship being the Infinite. But actually the Deity worshipped is Vishnu. In Him are the "infinite" forms of God.

'If you asked me which form of God you should meditate upon, I should say: Fix your attention on that form which appeals to you most ; but know for certain that all forms are the forms of one God alone.

'Never harbour malice toward anyone. Siva, Kali, and Hari are but different forms of that One. He is blessed indeed who has known all as one.

Outwardly he appears as Siva's devotee,
But in his heart he worships Kali, the Blissful Mother,
And with his tongue he chants aloud Lord Hari's name.

'The body does not endure without a trace of lust, anger, and the like. You should try to reduce them to a minimum.'

Question (asked by M.): 'How, Sir, may we fix our minds on God ?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Repeat God's name and sing His glories, and keep holy company ; and now and then visit God's devotees and holy men. The

1 A Tantric ritual in which a corpse (sava) is used by the worshipper as his seat.

mind cannot dwell on God if it is immersed day and night in worldliness, in worldly duties and responsibilities; it is most necessary to go into solitude now and then and think of God. To fix the mind on God is very difficult, in the beginning, unless one practises meditation in solitude. When a tree is young it should be fenced all around; otherwise it may be destroyed by cattle.

'To meditate, you should withdraw within yourself or retire to a secluded corner or to the forest. And should always discriminate between the Real and the unreal. God alone is real, the Eternal Substance; all else is unreal, that is impermanent. By discriminating thus, one should shake off impermanent objects from the mind.'

Question (asked by M.): 'Sir, is there no spiritual discipline leading to realization of the Impersonal God?'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Yes, there is. But the path is extremely difficult. After intense austerities the rishis of olden times realized God as their innermost consciousness and experienced the real nature of Brahman. But how hard they had to work! They went out of their dwellings in the early morning and all day practised austerities and meditation. Returning home at nightfall, they took a light supper of fruit and roots.

'But an aspirant cannot succeed in this form of spiritual discipline if his mind is stained with worldliness even in the slightest degree. The mind must withdraw totally from all objects of form, taste, smell, touch, and sound. Only thus does it become pure. The Pure Mind is the same as the Pure Atman. But such a mind must be altogether free from "woman" and "gold". When it becomes pure, one has another experience. One realizes: "God alone is the Doer, and I am His instrument." One does not feel oneself to be absolutely necessary to others either in their misery or in their happiness.

'Once a wicked man beat into unconsciousness a monk who lived in a monastery. On regaining consciousness he was asked by his friends "Who is feeding you milk?" The monk said, "He who beat me is now feeding me."'

M: 'Yes, sir. I know that story.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'It is not enough to know it. One must assimilate its meaning. It is the thought of worldly objects that prevents the mind from going into samadhi. One becomes established in samadhi when one is completely rid of worldliness. It is possible for me to give up the body in samadhi; but I have a slight desire to enjoy the love of God and the company of His devotees. Therefore I pay a little attention to my body.

'There is another kind of samadhi, called unmana samadhi. One attains it by suddenly gathering the dispersed mind. You understand what that is, don't you?'

M: 'Yes, sir.'

Sri Ramakrishna: 'Yes. It is the sudden withdrawal of the dispersed mind to the Ideal. But that samadhi does not last long. Worldly thoughts intrude and destroy it. The yogi slips down from his yoga.

'At Kamarpukur I have seeen the mongoose living in its hole up in the wall. It feels snug there. Sometimes people tie a brick to its tail; then the pull of the brick makes it come out of its hole. Every time the mongoose tries to be comfortable inside the hole, it has to come out because of the pull of the brick. Such is the effect of brooding on worldly objects that it makes the yogi stray from the path of yoga.

'Worldly people may now and then experience samadhi. The lotus blooms, no doubt, when the sun is up; but its petals close again when the sun is covered by a cloud. Worldly thought is the cloud.'

DAWN OF A GREAT ERA

The waters of a river falling in a cataract acquire greater velocity, the rising wave after a hollow swells higher; so after every spell of decline, the Aryan society recovering from all the evils by the merficul dispensation of Providence has risen the more glorious and powerful—such is the testimony of history.

After rising from every fall, our revived society is expressing more and more its innate eternal perfection, and so also the omnipresent Lord in each successive incarnation is manifesting Himself more and more.

Again and again has our country fallen into a swoon, as it were, and again and again has India's Lord, by the manifestation of Himself, revivified her.

But greater than the present deep dismal night, now almost over, no pall of darkness had ever before enveloped this holy land of ours. And compared with the depth of this fall, all previous falls appear like little hoof-marks.

Therefore, before the effulgence of this new awakening, the glory of all past revivals in her history will pale like stars before the rising sun; and compared with this mighty manifestation of renewed strength, all the many past epochs of such restoration will be as child's play.

So at the very dawn of this momentous epoch, the reconciliation of all aspects and ideals of religious thought and worship is being proclaimed. This boundless, all-embracing idea had been lying inherent, but so long concealed, in the Religion Eternal and its scriptures, and now rediscovered, it is being declared to humanity in a trumpet voice.

This epochal new dispensation is the harbinger of great good to the whole world, specially to India; and the inspirer of this dispensation, Sri Bhagavan Ramakrishna, is the reformed and remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in religion. O man, have faith in this, and lay it to heart.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

ONWARD FOR EVER!

To think that this world is the aim and end of life is brutal and degenerating. Any man who starts in life with that idea degenerates himself. He will never rise higher, he will never catch this glimpse from behind, he will always be a slave to the senses. He will struggle for the dollar that will get him a few cakes to eat. Better die than live that life. Slaves of this world, slaves of the senses, let us rouse ourselves; there is something higher than this sense-life. Do you think that man, the Infinite Spirit was born to be a slave to his eyes, his nose and his ears? There is an Infinite, Omniscient Spirit behind that can do everything, break every bond; and that Spirit we are, and we get that power through love. This is the ideal we must remember. We cannot, of course, get it in a day.... We must take man where he stands, and help him upwards. Man stands in materialism; you and I are materialists. Our talking about God, and Spirit, is good; but it is simply the vogue in our society to talk thus: we have learnt it parrot-like and repeat it. So we have to take ourselves where we are as materialists, and must take the help of matter, and go on slowly, until we become real spiritualists, and feel ourselves spirits, understand the spirit, and find that this world which we call the infinite is but a gross external form of that world which is behind.

Vivekananda

BHAGAVAD GITA, THE GENIUS OF SYNTHESIS

'The *Gita* is like a bouquet composed of the beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Upanishads'.

—Swami Vivekananda

I

Suppose someone compiled a book titled 'Books that Transform and Illuminate'. The *Gītā* is sure to find a place in it. If the compiler brings comparative study and spiritual insight to his task, and earnestly eschews fanaticism, he may give it the top-most place on the contents. And he will not be wrong at all.

There are other books which seem to challenge the claim of the *Gītā*. But the challenge is not serious. They do not possess the *Gītā's* breadth and profundity. It is specially the all-comprehending sweep, fulfilling the varied needs of spiritually aspiring humanity, that is the unique quality of the book.

The *Gītā* is an epitome of Hindu spiritual thought. Hinduism is the very genius of harmony and the *Gītā* is the most representative scripture of that spirit of synthesis. The synthesis is diverse. Oft-times many seemingly irreconcilable thoughts and modes are blended without violence to anyone of the constituents. The *Gītā* has synthesized, for instance, self-effort with divine grace, performance of duty with renunciation, devotion with knowledge, duality with non-duality, immanence with transcendence. We need not restrict this process to opposing pairs only. It has harmonized, for example, the three main schools of Indian philosophy and the four yogas of Sādhanā. Hence it is that a sedulous commentator, wedded to one school of thought only, will face considerable difficulty to squeeze this book into the perimeter of his philosophy.

Besides Hinduism, one has to look for the explanation of this synthetic spirit in

the author and the recorder of the *Song Celestial*. Vyāsa, the recorder, has harmony coursing in his vascular network. He has left his unmistakable imprint on the works of his pen like the *Vedānta-Sūtras*. But it is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Blue God, who is largely responsible for its vibrant harmony. The *Gītā* is Śrī Kṛṣṇa in melodious, cascading couplets.

Because Śrī Kṛṣṇa was the human personification of the spirit of synthesis, it was possible for this song to flow out of His soul's flute. To a close and devoted student, Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself as the Ideal Man. In Him are harmonized the various ideals cherished by humanity from the dawn of time. An ideal child to His parents and an ideal comrade to His boyhood friends; a hero in his manhood and an ideal householder; an ideal king and the most astute king-maker; an ideal administrator and an ideal servant; the busiest of human beings, yet the most relaxed of men—all these and many more[1] was Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Whatever scholars might say about the authorship of the *Gītā*, unless the author embodied to an amazing degree the spirit of synthesis in himself, it is impossible to imagine the *Gītā* emanating from him.

Let us study here a few of the synthesis that the *Gītā* has effected with superb skill.

II

Self-effort and Divine Will

A long and delicate debate goes on as to the relative primacy of self-effort and divine will. One camp pleads strongly for self-effort and the other vindicates the superiority of divine will. 'I can make or unmake my future,' says the self-effort party. 'No, you can't. Not even a blade of grass moves without the divine will,' counters the other. The *Gītā* recognizes the importance of both pointing out that success is dependent on a judicious combination. Without self-effort divine dispensation is never forthcoming; without the latter the former is sterile.

Placed as the scene is on the battlefield, the *Gītā* perforce advocates self-effort and manly fight. Arjuna's unmanliness, masquerading as pity, is clear as daylight to Kṛṣṇa's penetrative eye. To the sunken, sulky hero, Śrī Kṛṣṇa speaks in accents of courage. It does not behove Arjuna to be unmanly; ill does it befit him. He should shed his chicken-heartedness and bravely do his warrior-lord's duty.[2] Death being certain the warrior should rather welcome it on the field of battle. If he wins, he will enjoy a flourishing kingdom. If he succumbs, he will blaze a glorious trail and enter the heroes' heaven. Never should he flee from the battlefield. In real life, many people have a predisposition for the Arjuna-syndrome! Every man, if he is sincere to his ideals, will find himself on a moral battlefield. If Arjuna was asked to stand up with a determination to fight,[3] we also are asked to do the same. A man has to elevate himself by himself and never weaken. Why? Because, it is oneself that is one's enemy and so also one's friend.[4]

On the other hand, take the case of Arjuna when he is shown the Viśwarūpa (the cosmic form) by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Arjuna sees to his horror and dismay that the mighty generals of both the armies together with their soldiery are devoured by the Lord. Śrī Kṛṣṇa tells him that even if Arjuna is not there, still all would be destroyed.[5] What is Arjuna to do but to wield his weapons, behead those that are already killed, and corner all the glory! He is only to be an instrument, a mere

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1 Vide: *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, X. 43.17.

2 II. 3.

3 II. 37.

4 VI. 5.

5 XI. 32.

marionette, in the hands of God.[6] Laying all the emphasis on divine will, the *Gītā* says that God sits in the hearts of all beings and rotates them as if mounted on a whirligig.[7]

This is playing up the divine will a little too much, one might interpose.

The *Gītā,* while stressing sufficiently the importance of both, harmonizes very ably self-effort and divine will. 'Remember me constantly and fight'[8] is the keystone in the arch of synthesis. If one remembers God and remains inactive, that is useless. But vigorous fighting without being tuned to God is equally futile. Arjuna is asked to dedicate all actions to the Lord and, being free from egoism, hope, and anxiety, to fight.[9] This beautiful synthesis is figuratively touched upon in the closing verse which says: 'Wherever is Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of yoga, wherever is Pārtha, the wielder of the bow, there surely will be fortune, victory, prosperity, and right conduct. Such is my conviction.'[10] Arjuna with his bow represents manly endeavour and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Yogeśwara, symbolizes divine grace. These two are to unite if a spiritual aspirant is to succeed in his strivings.

III

Immanence and Transcendence

Is God exhausted in creation or totally absent and above it? In fine, is Pantheism the right view or Deism? Metaphysicians are locked in a tug-of-war on this issue. Is God purely immanent or entirely transcendent is a question that can never be settled academically. To give a judgement on Reality, taking our stand on the wrong side of It and viewing It through the smog of intellect and senses, is surely fruitless labour. Intellect can either go as far as the senses or grope about in a magic circle of abstract hypotheses. Some theologians have attempted a tight-rope walking between immanence and transcendence by proposing 'Immanent Theism' and that is good as far as it goes. But that is only a bloodless theological synthesis in comparison with what the *Gītā* has achieved.

You cannot accuse Śrī Kṛṣṇa of intellectualism. When He speaks, He speaks from first-hand knowledge of the Reality. He is not only one with It but the Reality Itself.[11] Hence it is that you cannot catch Him on the wrong foot. There is no attempt in the *Gītā* to build a rationalistic edifice of 'Immanent Theism'. Śrī Kṛṣṇa keeps weaving back and forth from transcendence to immanence with the natural ease of a man going up and down a skyscraper in an elevator. There is no contradiction between the topmost floor and the basement. They are all made of the same building materials. Only a man who has traversed the entire range of the Reality can give the most soul-satisfying explanation and that is what Śrī Kṛṣṇa does in the *Gītā*.

The *Gītā* declares that the Deity is not only the root but also that which eternally flowers and fades as the phenomenal universe. This world here is like a tree growing upside down with the roots above in the Imperishable.[12] As the formless, changeless Absolute, It pervades, percolates, and pulsates through every atom and particle of the manifested cosmos. What is caught in the mind-sense matrix is only a fraction of It.[13] Principally, chapters seven, nine, ten, and eleven tell us that there is nothing but God in the universe.

Though the transcendent alone can really

6 XI. 33.
7 XVIII. 61.
8 VIII. 7.
9 III. 30.
10 XVIII. 78.

11 XIV. 27.
12 XV. 1.
13 X. 42.

become the immanent, how actually It becomes so is a divine mystery.[14] Its feet and hands are everywhere; Its eyes and face, head and ears all over the universe.[15] On It is threaded all this as pearls on a string.[16] Unless all this is the same as that transcendent, how can the sage see sameness everywhere?[17] Again, how is it possible for the man of knowledge to see Him everywhere and everything in Him unless God has become everything?[18] What is applicable to the objective universe is applicable to the subjective also. It is He who indwells all.[19] Otherwise, it is not possible to look upon the learned and humble Brāhmaṇa, the cow, the elephant, the dog, and the dog-eater with the eye of sameness.[20]

In this marvellous way the *Gītā* has forged the synthesis between immanence and transcendence of God.

IV

Religious Harmony

Religions of men are many but religion of man is one. All religions have come out of man and not conversely. And humanity is same throughout the world and history. Though the radii at the circumference are divergent, and can be diametrically opposed, at the centre they meet and mingle. Religions of the world, however variant they be, are various paths that men have taken to reach the selfsame goal, namely God. The choice of the approach depends upon attitudes and aptitudes. But God is the centre of Truth to which all the radii of religions ultimately converge.

Among all the world-prophets, the credit of striking the first note of religious harmony should go to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This has markedly influenced the development of later Hindu thought and history. As all men—though marching under different religious banners—are fellow-pilgrims to the sanctuary of Truth, why there should be inter-religious rivalry is a question past the understanding of the *Gītā*.

Some of the finest utterances about religious harmony are strewn in the *Gītā*. What statement can ever equal or excel in breadth and catholicity the one Śrī Kṛṣṇa makes in the fourth chapter? 'In whatsoever way men approach Me,' says He, 'even so I reward them; for it is My path, O Pārtha, that men follow everywhere.'[21] Small wonder that Swami Vivekananda quoted this stanza in his historic response to welcome at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago.

What Śrī Kṛṣṇa, as a true teacher, would, however, insist upon in the votary is sincerity. 'Whatever form a devotee may worship with faith,' says Kṛṣṇa, 'in that form alone I make his faith unwavering.'[22] Because, as He says, 'I am the Lord and Enjoyer of all forms of worship.'[23]

V

Philosophical Synthesis

All of Hindu religious thought may be subsumed under the three main philosophical schools led by Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva. All the three Ācāryas have written commentaries on the *Gītā*, seeking to interpret it in the light of each philosophical school. The *Gītā* is malleable enough for the attempts. Though the tenor of the *Gītā* seems to lend support to dualistic schools, there are many passages in it

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14 IX. 5.
15 XIII. 13.
16 VII. 7.
17 XIII. 27.
18 VI. 30.
19 X. 20; XV. 15.
20 V. 18.

21 IV. 11.
22 VII. 21.
23 IX. 24.

which unmistakably uphold non-dualism. But it harmonizes all the standpoints in the happiest way possible.

The chief-servant of Śrī Rāma, Hanumān, is justly famous for a luminous utterance. The drift of it is: When a man identifies himself with the body, he feels a separation from God. When he knows that he is a non-material soul anchored in the body, he feels himself a part of God. When he realizes his essential divine nature, he comes to know his identity with God.

The *Gītā* clearly shows that men are at various stages of development, and some have reached the summit of Truth. From the standpoint of the man of knowledge, there is no difference, none whatsoever. To his clear vision, all differences are blotted out. The supreme Self, conditioned by a psycho-physical personality, is the Jīva, the individual soul.[24] 'Having no beginning and possessing no guṇas, this supreme and imperishable Self, O Arjuna, neither acts nor is stained by action even while dwelling in the body.'[25] This universe is like a conjurer's trick. In actuality it is non-existent. In other words, it is the immutable supreme Itself: 'When he sees that the manifold nature of beings is centred in the one and that all evolution is from that One alone, he becomes one with Brahman.'[26]

The *Gītā* does not deny plurality of souls or reality of creation. From one standpoint difference and manifestation are as real as unity and transcendence.[27] The individual soul is only a part of God and is in ignorance and misery.[28] Māyā is the power of God and holds all souls in bondage. He who wants to cross over to the shore of Reality must take shelter in Him.[29] The Lord, out of compassion, takes human birth for the redemption of man. In such embodiment, He, never for a moment, comes under the control of māyā. By meditating on His divine birth and exploits, a man is liberated.[30] Love for and self-surrender to Him are the means of getting liberation.[31] This world is a temporary and fearfully miserable abode and the permanent home is God Himself.[32]

VI

Synthesis of the Four Yogas

Madhusūdana Saraswatī, a great Advaitic exegete, broadly divides the *Gītā* into three sections of six chapters each. The first section is called Karma-ṣaṭka, the second Bhakti-ṣaṭka, and the third Jñāna-ṣaṭka. And he has his reasons for it. But to make a cut and dried division of the *Gītā* into Karma, Bhakti, and Jñāna sections becomes untenable. It is because the *Gītā* is a book that synthesizes the yogas. Even the designation of certain chapters as Karma-yoga or Jñāna-yoga is only on the basis of the predominating idea in it. A chapter which is called Karma-yoga or Jñāna-yoga surely has elements of Bhakti or Karma mixed with it.

No man is an island, said a literary noteworthy. Similarly we may say, no man is a monotony. Though each one of us may claim to be an execlusive devotee, or a worker, or a rationalist, we all have subdued elements of activity, reason, and devotion coexisting within us. It is nobody's fault. The psychological make-up of man is such. So, it is not strange that the *Gītā*, a universal handbook of spiritual life, should syn-

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24 VIII. 3.
25 XIII. 31.
26 XIII. 30.
27 X. 8.
28 XV. 7; IX. 3.
29 VII. 14
30 IV. 6, 9.
31 VIII. 22; XVIII. 66.
32 VIII. 15.

thesize all the four main streams of Sādhanā.

The *Gītā* says categorically that knowledge and action are not contradictory and that he who is firmly set on one reaches the end of both.[33] The disciplines of action and knowledge are mingled in the second chapter though the chapter is designated 'yoga of knowledge'. Sometimes in a single stanza the *Gītā* combines them both, as for example: 'The works of a man whose attachment is gone, who is free, and whose mind is established in knowledge, melt away, being done selflessly.'[34] In one of the most beautiful blendings of action and devotion, or work and worship, rendered by the *Gītā,* we read: 'By worshipping Him from whom all beings proceed and by whom the whole universe is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of duty does a man attain perfection.'[35] Bhakti and Jñāna, or devotion and knowledge are combined in many instances. One example may be cited: 'Having become Brahman and being tranquil in heart, he neither grieves nor desires. He treats alike all beings and attains supreme devotion to Me.'[36] Knowledge, devotion, and yoga of Patañjali are very neatly synthesized in a few verses of the eighth chapter (9-13). In one verse which Śaṅkara considers as the cream of the *Gītā,* knowledge, devotion, and action are admirably synthesized.[37] The last chapter of the *Gītā,* again, is not only a summary of the entire message but also a masterly synthesis of all yogas.

VII

In conclusion, we bring together here a few relevant saying of Swami Vivekananda on the protean personality of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *Gītā's* message of synthesis :

'He is the most rounded man I know of, wonderfully developed equally in brain and heart and hand. Every moment (of his) is alive with activity, either as a gentleman, warrior, minister, or something else. Great as a gentleman, as a scholar, as a poet. This all-round and wonderful activity and combination of brain and heart you see in the *Gītā* and other books. Most wonderful heart, exquisite language, and nothing can approach it anywhere. This tremendous activity of the man—the impression is still there. Five thousand years have passed and he has influenced millions and millions. Just think what an influence this man has over the whole world, whether you know it or not. My regard for him is for his perfect sanity. No cobwebs in that brain, no superstition. He knows the use of everything, and when it is necessary to (assign a place to each), he is there.'[38]

'The *Gītā* takes the ideas of the Upanishads and in (some) cases the very words. They are strung together with the idea of bringing out, in a compact, condensed, and systematic form, the whole subject the Upanishads deal with.'[39]

'Than the *Gītā* no better commentary on the Vedas has been written or can be written. The essence of the Shrutis, or of the Upanishads, is hard to be understood, seeing that there are so many commentators, each one trying to interpret in his own way. Then the Lord Himself comes, He who is the inspirer of the Shrutis, to show us the meaning of them, as the preacher of the *Gītā,* and today India wants nothing better, the world wants nothing better than that method of interpretation. It is a wonder that subsequent interpreters of the scriptures, even commenting upon the *Gītā,* many times could not catch

33 V. 4.
34 IV. 23.
35 XVIII. 46.
36 XVIII. 54.
37 XI. 55.

38 *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* (Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, Vol. I, 1962), p. 457.
39 ib. p. 446.

the meaning, many times could not catch the drift.... But you find in the *Gītā* there is no attempt at torturing any one of them. They are all right, says the Lord; for slowly and gradually the human soul rises up and up, step after step, from the gross to the fine, from the fine to the finer, until it reaches the Absolute, the goal. That is what is in the *Gītā*. Even the Karma Kanda is taken up, and it is shown that although it cannot give salvation direct, but only indirectly, yet that is also valid; images are valid indirectly; ceremonies, forms, everything is valid only with one condition, purity of the heart. For worship is valid, and leads to the goal, if the heart is pure and the heart is sincere; and all these various modes of worship are necessary, else why should they be there? ... They are the outcome of the necessity of the human soul. They are all here to satisfy the hankering and thirst of different classes of human minds, and you need not preach against them. The day when that necessity will cease they will vanish along with the cessation of that necessity, and so long as that necessity remains they must be there, in spite of your preaching, in spite of your criticisms. You may bring the sword or the gun into play, you may deluge the world with human blood, but so long as there is a necessity for idols, they must remain. These forms, and all the various steps in religion will remain, and we understand from the Lord Shri Krishna why they should.'[40]

[40] ib. Vol. III, 1960, pp. 261-2.

LETTERS OF A SAINT

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MY REFUGE

Kankhal
10.9.1914

Dear—,

This time I did not receive a letter from you after a long time. This caused me great concern at times. For some days past I have been very worried. However, I received your letter yesterday and am pleased with all the news.... My health has deteriorated a great deal in the meantime. Having taken up a new kind of treatment I had to reap contrary results. Whatever is Lord's will, that alone produces beneficial results. Our own efforts often turn out otherwise.

I am happy to know that you have been able to learn quite a few new ideas about Karma Yoga.[1] This is the idea: be it work with desire or work without desire, we should constantly keep this attitude awake within ourselves:

यत्करोषि यदश्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।
यत्तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तत्कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

'Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice,

[1] The reference here is to the writer's letter dated 27.7.1914, in which he expounded on Karma Yoga at length. The letter is published in the March 1971 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

whatever you give away, whatever austerity you practise, O Son of Kunti, do it as an offering to Me.'[2]

You are inside me, outside me; I am the machine You are the operator; I move as You move me. This is the main point. Can this be achieved at one stroke? Practice is necessary. Through repeated practice this will come about all right. He will then really operate the body like an operator. 'By some artifice Shyāmā Herself remains bound by the string of devotion'—this saying is very true. He is doing everything; incapable of understanding this we think we are doing all this and thus get bound by action. In the pot in which rice is being cooked, vegetables keep on jumping about. Children think that vegetables are jumping of themselves; but those who know say that they are jumping due to the heat of the fire below the pot. Pull out the fire and everything will be quiet. Likewise, He is doing everything by residing with us as the power of consciousness (*Caitanya-śakti*) and power of action (*Kṛyā-śakti*). Unable to understand this we say that we act.

Is there anyone else in this world (but He)? He alone exists in various ways. We cannot comprehend this and so see the other many instead of seeing Him (who alone is). When we can see Him, we have not to see the many—have also not to suffer. He is within all. He is all. When this knowledge ripens one is free.

In the *Vyādha-gītā*,[3] the hunter had attained knowledge in a previous birth. But due to *prārabdha-karma*[4] he got the body of a hunter. So he used to do the work pertaining to his caste in a spirit of duty. But he himself would not commit acts of violence. He used to purchase meat and sell it to others. This is what we find in the *Mahābhārata.* As to your reference to 'he who is free from the notion of egoism,'[5] if you reflect a little you will understand that if there is no egoism or sense of 'I am the doer', whence will bondage then arise? It is this 'I' which binds. 'When shall I be free? When 'I' will go (then I shall be free) When 'I' is not there, where is the bondage? Not I, not I, but Thou, Thou. He whose 'I' has left, he only sees Him. So, where is his bondage?

Sri Turiyananda

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[2] *Bhagavad-gītā* IX. 27.

[3] *Vyādha-Gītā* occuring in the *Mahābhārata* (Vana-parvan, Chapter 207-216) the Hindu epic, teaches the highest Vedanta.

[4] Action done in a previous life which has begun to bear fruit in the present life.

[5] 'The reference here is to the verse:

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।
हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान्न हन्ति न निबध्यते ।

'He who is free from the notion of egoism, whose intelligence is not affected (by good or evil), though he kills these people, he kills not; nor is he bound (by the action).

Bhagavad-gītā, XVIII.17

THE BASIS OF SOCIAL PSYCHIATRY AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Dr. Jurij Zalokar

The activity of mental hygiene and social psychiatry wants to conform to the definition of health adopted by the World Health Organization : 'Health is the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and does not consist merely in the absence of disease and deficiency.' Set in this manner, the tasks of mental hygiene would not be problematic if this hygiene were based on an actually integral conception of man and if it included—besides physical, psychological and social determinants—his religious nature. Yet up to this day, mental hygiene has not achieved such breadth. When clergymen also participate in it, their part is somewhat secondary. We do not want this to mean that the clergymen's position should be strengthened ; as this could lead to dangerous clericalization. What ought to be more important is the flair—in the psychiatrists themselves—for the importance of religion. Their entire activity should be impregnated with the religious dimension, too.

As we have mentioned above, we miss such an evolution. Mental hygiene is being predominated over by partial views that are sometimes concentrated upon less momentous sections of human existence. Thus, for some time attention was focussed on genetics and degeneration (Lombroso), what happened precisely in the period when genetics experienced its first upswing. And later on, still after the biological schema, attention turned to the process of the instinctive powers in human psyche under the influence of Freud and his successors. Nor has this predominantly materialistic view afforded any breadth, although it wanted to be universal.

Later on, mental hygiene all too much adopted a social course by endorsing the belief in the exclusive importance of social laws to modelling man. Although various sociological tenets may be widely true, their absolutizing is unreal, since this, too, is only a partial aspect of man. Man is certainly not absolutely determined by economic or social laws. Convincing proof is provided ever more frequently that the settling of socio-economic problems is no universal answer to the question of mental health. 'Sociologizing' even results in some perilous consequences since it might lead to the atrophy of personal responsibility, as Man—overestimating the importance of Society—demands anything from it without himself contributing to it ; or as Society totalizes itself in order to crush any individuality.

At this point we should like to mention, that some of the subsequent currents in mental hygiene are partial too, though they may assume a more integral aspect. Such is the humanistic view which places in the foreground a somewhat material humanity. This humanism overrates man by absolutizing him in his outward, phenomenal aspect. In doing so, it is fatally tearing him apart from his absolute existential entity, which consequently withdraws itself into his subconscious and changes into a menacing cloud. Man is quivering with fear of it as of an unknown horror. This is the origin of that anxiety that is so characteristic of our time. Therefore, humanism open only to the phenomenal world is more of an entirety but still fatefully narrow, and mental hygiene, having absolute confidence in it, lapses into the general dread imbuing today's world. Such an effort by mental hygiene remains sterile. If it eliminates a

given conflict, clouds of a menacing subconscious gather at once, and a number of new conflicts arise, worse than the one that has been removed. Nevertheless this may be a necessary step in the progressive movement of psychiatric thought.

At last a more entire aspect is coming to the fore. Some workers in the field of psychiatry already feel its present deficiencies and want to open themselves to new dimensions. Independently of each other, as though under an invisible spirit's baton, new focusses of specialists are arising within psychiatry and some other sciences, who are opening themselves to the religious dimension too. At least a few among them have been obviously inspired by Indian thought, especially the Vivekananda tenet, teaching the necessary and possible synthesis of religious and scientific thought.

A remarkable contribution to such trends has been given by eminent psychiatrists and psychologists like Jaspers, Baruk, Laforgue, Frankl, Mowrer etc. Here I want above all to mention the Swiss psychiatrist C. G. Jung, who cautioned against the release of partial tendencies of human behaviour to the detriment of the integrity of personality. He wrote that their liberation '...leads into chaos and a pertinent nihilism, since it abolishes the individual's unity and entirety, and thereby destroys the latter'.[1] Even intellectualism represents such a danger. Jung wrote: 'Our intellect has accomplished enormous things, whilst our spiritual house has collapsed ... The spirit may well assume the *patria potestas* over the soul; not so the earth-bred intellect, which is only a sword or hammer of man and not a creator of spiritual worlds, not a father of the soul.'[2]

It was precisely such overestimations of intellect and instinct that bereft man of the ear for religion and its symbolism and thereby deprived him of the groundwork of his existence. Of course, the decline of interest in religion is in connection as well with the decay of spiritual life which degenerated into different modes of formalism (dogmatism, institutionalism, idolatry etc.).

Thus some trends of modern psychiatry lead us to a higher synthesis which admits the spiritual values as one of constituents of human personality. Ascertaining such a close affinity between medicine and spirituality, we are not ascertaining anything new. At numerous medical faculties, the students at the end of their studies take the Hippocratic oath, which begins with entreating the gods. Hippocrates' medicine, the groundwork of today's scientific medical thought, was itself based on spiritual values. Nor did the second founder and renewer of scientific medicine, Paracelsus of the 16th century, isolate the scientific thought, but exacted a knowledge and treatment of man, as entire as feasible. He wrote down: 'These two vocations—to announce the Word of God, and to cure men—should not be parted from each other',[3] and: 'If an unbeliever becomes a physician, he will not strive after the Kingdom of Heaven; and thus it shall be proven that without the Lord no proper work can arise ... Therefore a physician has to establish his groundwork upon the Spirit, for without it, he will be nothing but a sham physician, a stray of flighty spirit.'[4] The same could be said of mental hygiene and social psychiatry. Most unfortunately, the medicine up until now only refers to Paracelsus' stricter empirical-scientific work, and does not speak up about this second part of his thought, without which the first one has no real significance.

[1] C. G. Jung: *Bewusstes und Unbewusstes,* Fischer Verl., Hamburg, 1957, p. 24.

[2] ibid.: p. 25.

[3] Theophrastus Paracelsus: *Lebendiges Erbe,* Rascher Verl., Zürich, 1962, p. 67.

[4] ibid., p. 71.

VIVEKANANDA AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN THOUGHT

SRI G. S. PATHAK,

Swami Vivekananda's discourses, speeches and, writings fascinate and inspire. To say that his teachings have relevance to current times is only a partial statement of the truth. He spoke of eternal verities which have relevance to all times. His exposition of the Vedas and Vedānta philosophy is monumental; his elucidation of Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Advaita doctrines is most illuminating; his examination of Karma-yoga, Rāja-yoga, Bhakti-yoga, and Jñāna-yoga is unparalleled. With touching reverence for his Guru, Paramahaṁsa Ramakrishna, he said: 'All the ideas I preach are only an attempt to echo his ideas.' He explained to the world his concept of God, both personal and impersonal, the relationship between man and God and his concept of Sat-cit-ānanda with convincing lucidity. His idea of equality flowed from his faith in the identity of Ātman with Brahman; he asserted that none can be Vedantists and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone, mental, physical, or spiritual. He believed not only in universal toleration, but accepted all religions as true and for this universal aspect of the Hindu religion he quoted from the *Gītā*: 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatever form, I reach him. All men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.' Quoting from the Śiva-mahimnaḥ-stotra he said: 'Different rivers having their sources in different places, all mingle their waters in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.' He explained: 'External worship is only a symbol of internal worship but internal worship and purity are the real things. The gist of all worship is to be pure and to do good to others.'

He defined Sannyāsa as sacrifice of everything for the good of others. He taught that he who serves all beings serves God indeed. Selfishness, according to him, was the chief sin. He explained the true meaning of Dāna. The highest of gifts, said Swami Vivekananda, was the giving of spiritual knowledge and he was one of the greatest donors of this rare commodity. He freely gave this to all who cared to listen to him and his gift has permanent value to be enjoyed by generations to follow. He visualized the tremendous progress which science and technology were to make and the problems of evil and destruction that they might bring in their train. The cure prescribed by him was spirituality. He mentions manifestations of muscular power and of intellect expressing themselves through machines by the application of science. But he said none of these is more potent than the influence which the spirit exerts upon the world.

Swami Vivekananda's has been a household name in India for nearly eight decades. His profound spirituality, the scintillating brilliance of his intellect, and the effulgence of his personality invested him with a magic fascination which none could ignore or resist. Here was a man who spoke inspiring words to the masses like a messiah come to retrieve their lives from darkness and misery. Here was one who spoke of our ancient learning in words of the highest praise, but at the same time urged that we throw off the shackles of convention. Here was a hitherto unknown combination of the traditional and revolutionary, whose mission was not only to reawaken the people to a consciousness of their great heritage but also to make them

new men who could make a new India. Nehru described Swamiji as 'a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present' and to Romain Rolland Swamiji represented 'Equilibrium and Synthesis' and 'the harmony of all human energy'.

We are passing through a period of great trial and tribulation to mankind in almost all parts of the world. In the more advanced nations we have the phenomenon of technology outstripping humanism. In the less developed countries we see economic and other inadequacies weighing the people down. In many places we see evidence of man's inhumanity to man, the perpetuation of iniquitous distinctions of colour, race, religion, and caste. There have been instances where an intense uncompromising nationalism has led to war and misery. Swami Vivekananda set himself against all these factors which contributed to human misery. He voiced the need for a 'Universal Religion' in these words:

> 'If there is to be a Universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time, which will be infinite, like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike.... which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for every human being.... It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be centred in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.'

Humanity, compassion, and service were an integral part of Swamiji's religion. His heart went out to the masses. Referring to their plight in our country he said:

> 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail, until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples.... If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.'

These words were spoken several years ago. Some of them ring true even today.

Swamiji was an ardent patriot and it has been truly said that the Indian national movement for freedom was but a continuation of the ferment created by Vivekananda. Indeed, his greatest contribution was to restore to the people of India a sense of pride in their glorious cultural and spiritual heritage. His constant themes were 'man-making' and 'nation-building' and his constant endeavour was to 'create a body politic inspired with a vision of human dignity, equality, and worth'. He insisted that strength and freedom were necessary for nationalism. 'Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page... the Upanishads are the great mine of strength...' Swamiji's words were indeed prophetic, as history is witnessed, when he declared: 'India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit, not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love...' It was left to Mahatma Gandhi to make Swamiji's vision a reality.

Swamiji was a man of God whose divinity Ramakrishna Paramahamsa discovered early. A master of Yoga, a philosopher whose erudition was deep and wide, an ardent patriot, an intense humanist, a great writer, traveller and speaker—Swamiji was all this in one person. He thought of all human problems and activity and spoke about them, with conviction, knowledge, and force.

It is in keeping with our finest tradition that Swami Vivekananda became a Parivrājaka wandering all over the country spreading his message. The great Ādi Śaṅkara was one of our earliest Parivrājakas

and his spiritual mission took him all over the country. It is as Parivrājakas that these great men of God met and influenced our people from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. The meditation on the rock, already sanctified by the earlier meditation by the Mother Herself on Śiva, was a turning point in Swamiji's life. When he rose from the rock, it was to go forth to speak and work in fulfilment of the great vision he had of Mother India and her future. The Parliament of Religions at Chicago made Swamiji a world figure. But perhaps the most important consequence of the meditation on the rock was the fiery zeal for service to humanity which marked Swamiji's deeds and words henceforth.

The Ramakrishna Mission has few equals in the world as an organization dedicated to the service of the people. It is a Mission where service is regarded as a spiritual necessity and a spiritual fulfilment. If we pause to consider the magnitude of this great organization and its many branches all over the world, and the inspired men who are in charge of them, and the many kinds of duties performed by its centres, we cannot doubt that it was the will of God working through Swamiji which gave birth to the idea of the Mission and proceeded to fulfil it.

I congratulate the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee on the successful celebrations which are terminating today. In raising this Memorial, finding the funds and men to do it, the Committee have rendered a service of inestimable value. May the Rock Memorial become one more of the many sacred places of pilgrimage for our people and continue to inspire them with the shining message of Swami Vivekananda for all time to come!

"... It is said sometimes that religions are dying out, that spiritual ideas are dying out of the world. To me it seems that they have just begun to grow .... So long as religion was in the hands of a chosen few, or of a body of priests, it was in temples, churches, books, dogmas, ceremonials, forms, and rituals. But when we come to the real, spiritual, universal concept, then and then alone religion will become real and living; it will come into our very nature, live in our every movement, penetrate every pore of our society, and be infinitely more a power for good than it has ever been before."

—Swami Vivekananda

TAGORE AND ANDREWS

Sri R. N. Bose

The meeting of the East and the West was never more fruitful in truth than in the friendship of Rabindranath Tagore and C. F. Andrews. Fortunately much of the record of this unique friendship is preserved for us in their heart to heart correspondence. So it is possible to peep into this treasure-house of love and friendship, amazingly rich as a 'sanctuary of eternal perspectives'.

They first met in London on June 30, 1912, at Rothenstein's, though Andrews had been in India earlier in 1904 as a missonary of the Cambridge Brotherhood. The first meeting had far-reaching effects and it is best described in Andrews's own words:

> 'That night the supreme delicacy and beauty of India's great world culture was brought home to me with overwhelming power as I listened to the poet's songs and met the poet himself.
>
> 'It was a night of inner illumination and clear vision.'

Long after this in the memorial service of Andrews at Santiniketan on April 5, 1940, the poet recollects this first meeting and says:

> 'It was a moonlit night when we walked slowly across the downs of Hampstead Heath. In the silence of the night, his mind overflowed with the spirit of the *Gitanjali*. Through this high way of divine love was made human love for me possible. Who could have guessed then the richly varied cooperation in deeds and ideas that emerged and continued to the end of his life?
>
> 'I consider such genuine and abounding love among the greatest treasures of my life.' (Translated)

His other great friend, Mahatma Gandhi, in a short foreword to his biography wrote: 'Charlie Andrews was simple like a child, upright as a die, and shy to a degree.'

Yet this shy man opened out his heart at least to two great Indian friends, Tagore and Gandhi.

Writing in 1926 Andrews traces this unique friendship:

> 'Long before I met the poet personally in 1912 I had worshipped his genius from afar but from 1913 onwards, it was the greatest joy and privilege of my life to be his daily companion in Santiniketan. This privilege has been quite unbroken ever since.
>
> 'He has been my Gurudeva, teaching me to understand and love humanity in the East no less than I had learnt in earlier years to love it in the West. By his love and patience he broke down within me the narrow barriers of religious tradition which had confined me before, owing to my birth, upbringing, and education.
>
> 'Nothing but a friendship so deep and sincere as his could have effected this....
>
> 'He has been a supreme treasure in my life, the greatest gift which God has given me in human ways.'

That it was love and admiration at first sight has already been noted. That it was not one way flow in friendship is also to be stressed.

Writing to Andrews's mother, not long after the meeting at Rothenstein's in London, the poet affirms:

> 'Your son is more than a brother to me and his love for me is one of the most precious gifts that fell to my share in this world.'

And again in 1914 he wrote to Andrews's father:

> 'I am sure you know your son Charlie is with me in our Ashram and I feel I must let you know what a joy and help he is to us....
>
> 'It proves an amazing wealth of sympathy in him to be able to overcome all

barriers of race, language and tradition, of physical and mental habits. I can assure you that this love that he has brought to us will not be thrown away and he will be richly rewarded by the good he will leave behind him and love he will carry from us.'

Andrews came to Santiniketan on Feb. 19, 1930. He was entering a new stage in his life as a pilgrim on the open road. He wrote in 1913 soon after he joined Santiniketan :

'The call comes more and more insistently to give my whole love and affection to India herself and live the Christian life in doing so. If I remain a missionary, in a somewhat narrow missionary society, I am in a sort of bondage.'

Here the two pilgrims—in a letter Tagore referred to himself as 'a pilgrim on the open road' become fellow travellers on the open road. The commitment to love made Andrews dedicate himself to Tagore's work and when in April 1914 Tagore received him in Santiniketan first, Andrews was given a reception. On that occasion the poet recited a poem especially composed to welcome the guest. We are fortunate in having Tagore's own rendering in English of the lines which run thus:

'From the shrine of the West,
You have brought us living water,
We welcome you, Friend.
The East has offered you her garland of love
Accept it, and welcome, Friend.
You have opened the door of our heart,
Enter, and welcome, Friend.
You come to us as a gift of the Lord,
We bow to Him, Friend.'

Andrews had many friends in England, in India, and in other lands. But his friendship with Tagore was different. It was intimate but restrained, verging on adoration. Yet too full for 'sound or foam'.

In reverence, the receptive disciple met the wonderful teacher that was Tagore. There was an elevating atmosphere in this friendship. Though essentially a man of action, Andrews was still a contemplative. He felt attracted to heroes of action like Gandhi and Schweitzer and to savants of contemplation like Tagore and Rolland, some of whose philosophy he shared. But Tagore's special appeal to him was in the great expectations of man's future, when Christ's prophecy of the 'Kingdom of God' on earth will be fulfilled. So even when the crusader in Andrews responded to the 'singleness of purpose and to the high appeal to sacrifice', Tagore loomed large in his life with the direct inspiration of that certainty of the ultimate greatness of man.

It is difficult to analyse this elevating friendship, a transcendent interaction of two uncommon personalities. Its main ingredients were understanding, mutual reliance, and a sense of being tuned to the infinite. As Tagore wrote when spiritual struggles encompassed his friend's mind : 'I cannot tell you the great joy of seeing everything through the sight of the soul.' As a matter of fact, Tagore's serene and sublime spirit was a benediction to his younger friend. Writing in the introduction to his *Christ in Silence,* Andrews rightly affirmed this: 'I did find a depth of still and quiet calm in Tagore which I have never witnessed with such intensity before.' Tagore also wrote to Andrews: 'I know your friendship will be a shelter for me under whose protection I shall have my peace and rest.' That this friendship was charged with a mother's protective tenderness as also a disciple's reverent devotion to a master is clear enough; and how urgently Tagore needed the protection is also seen from his many letters:

'If I recklessly scatter myself all about me, I cannot grow. And if I do not grow I cannot produce the fruits and flowers that are claimed from me by the whole scheme of things.'

But above all these, Tagore had the insight to appreciate the greater glory of Andrews as the following letter written by him in 1933 will indicate:

> 'I know you have been of help to your fellow beings not merely for some individual benefits that you may have rendered them but for the direct inspiration that gives us certainty of the ultimate greatness of man.' At the same time the poet stressed: 'You know how all through my life my idea of the divine has concentrated in *Man the Eternal* and I find that confirmed in your religious experience (as embodied in 'What I owe to Christ').'

Not that the poet was admiring Andrews any less for doing great work in a wide field of activity. 'But he sometimes looks aghast at the mental and physical energy stored up in ages in his friend's western constitution,' urging him to activities that are saved from aberration but not always from worries.

Andrews knew his own short-comings and the first letter he wrote after his visit to Santiniketan on March 8, 1913, is significant as it also contains his first testimony of faith: 'You must have realized that I have accepted you as my Guru and, however unworthy, I am one of your disciples.' And in his letter from abroad on Dec. 7, 1913, Andrews wrote:

> 'You must have felt and known that I can express my soul's deepest yearnings only to you. When you tell me of your deeper inner experiences and of your Sadhana to me, I feel the call. This is the basis of our exchange of love and our heart to heart friendship and this also is the path to my merciful Lord.'

In his letter from Durban, January 1, 1914, Andrews hints at what is near initiation: 'You gave me the message I needed most when you were unfolding the secret of your own spiritual power.' Again and again Andrews mentions how his Guru's serene presence radiated peace and tranquillity that he needed so much. From the spiritual message of India's great prayers like 'Lead me from the unreal to the Real,...' that he learnt from his friend, he tried to maintain his mental balance and equipoise. But a hurricane of activity drove Andrews from one point to another in a maze of duties and his amazing vitality wanted to apply its energy to all directions. Tagore's letter of Feb. 1923 must be quoted *in extenso* to show how the Guru had taken the disciple in hand:

> 'Lately you looked so distracted and seemed unhappy that it has made me anxious for your sake since you left the place. I always earnestly wish that you can have inner peace amidst your multifarious burden of works. But I find you are very cruel to yourself and you never allow any time of the day to remain unoccupied when you can come to your deeper self. This weariness grows and your atmosphere is filled with self-torturing thoughts and imaginings. A great part of your mind's burden consists of useless refuse and fragments of daily cares which have to be swept away.
>
> 'I am also by nature impatient, anxious, and often fretful and therefore I never wish to miss the daily opportunity of coming into touch with the truth which is peace.'

Thus the friend, who is also the philosopher and guide, by precept and example seeks to foster the clearness of life's perspectives in the disciple. If the Guru is great in wisdom, the friend turns more and more to be an apt disciple. Andrews would often write in reply to the Poet's friendly admonition and advice:

> 'As ever happens you have found what was wrong in me and I have set it right. I have been too carried away by the exciting atmosphere of the time in which we live.'

But apart from this spiritual relationship Andrews's friendship helped Tagore in other ways, for Andrews was a first-rate

public relations expert and a brilliant expositor of his friend's ideas.

When the artist in Tagore confronted the rigid idealist in Gandhi and he raised his penetrating voice against the negative nature of Gandhi's non-cooperation, Andrews could not debate with Tagore with the same vehemence and freedom as he did with Gandhi but he would bring Gandhi's arguments to 'the great sentinel' and act as a bridge-builder.

But in all cases Andrews left the last word to Tagore and agreed to differ from Gandhi on many items of his programmes though fundamentally he accepted its basis. More and more he also came to believe with Tagore 'that our activities are in the finite world, but our fulfilments are in the infinite, like the lotus whose roots are active in the dark depths of the earth but whose flower is in the open sky'.

Thus after completing his fiftieth year, he wrote the following mature evaluation of his life to Tagore:

> 'It has been a crowded life full of incidents and changes and yet the inner peace at the centre of my life has been deepening and the storms of religious doubts and questioning have ceased to rage, as they did in the earlier days before I came to know you.
>
> 'I have been thinking of these things this morning and I bowed my head in worship to the Santam, Sivam, and Advaitam.'

All his later years, his aspiration was after comprehensions and love while he continued to do his sacred duty 'to renew the message of Christ, so often forgotten or betrayed', in deeds and not in mere words. This realization in love he owed to his Lord.

But the deepening peace and inner harmony he achieved came in no small measure from Tagore who illumined his mature days and helped in gaining 'an emancipation in spirit'. This he owed to Tagore and he abundantly made it clear in his writings.

Andrews thus recorded his last message on 30.3.40:

> 'During these days of waiting ... my thoughts have been with God. I have been wonderfully helped in keeping Santi (Peace) by thoughts of Gurudeva and what I learnt at Santiniketan. God has given me the greatest of all gifts,—namely the supreme gift of friendship.'

The friend who is a helpmate,
And the friend of bright days and of dark,
And he who shows what 'tis you need,
And he who throbs for you with sympathy:—
These four the wise should know as friends.

—*Sigalo-Vada Sutta* 26

The wise man by his culture gathers his friends,
and by his friends develops his goodness of character.

—*Analects of Confucius* 601

WHAT IS TRUTH?

Dr Clarence Shute

'What is truth?' These last words of Pilate to Christ before the crucifixion[1] have remained unanswered, although answers without number have been attempted by the philosophers of the world. The question still hovers over our minds as a mystery.

In the main, these philosophical discussions have centered on truth as a property not of facts, but of *statements about* facts. We do not say 'this chair is true,' but we do say, 'that this chair is made of wood is true.' To extend this to include some earlier ways of conceiving truth we may say that truth has been considered to be a property of ideas or words: ideas in the mind, or the transcriptions of these ideas into words.

It is in this sense that meaningfully different statements have been made about the truth of various religions. Some believe that only one religion is true; or, to use logical jargon, 'there is *at most* one true religion'. This accommodates both the devotee of a religion claiming exclusive religious truth, and the one who presently accepts none but believes that, among differing religious creeds, if there be *any* which is true, there can be but one.

Others proclaim that 'all religions are equally true'. In some cases this is meant positively: there is truth in all religions and the truth in one is equitable with that in any other. In other cases it is a dilettante statement which really means 'all religions are equally false'.

A third group of utterances falls between these extremes. They are of the form, 'There is *some* truth in all religions, and this truth is *enough* to enable the sincere follower to reach the common goal of all'. If I understand them correctly, this was the position of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Swami Vivekananda. They did not condescendingly emphasize the 'some' in the above formula, but in a large spirit of interfaith fellowship emphasized the 'enough'.

It is the purpose of this paper to inquire into the philosophical meaning of this third class of utterances about the truth of religion. In general the interpretation of these statements has drawn heavily on the significance of symbols. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the role of symbols in human life. In discussing the importance of symbols in the life of faith, Paul Tillich has called attention to the difference between *signs* and symbols. Signs point to something else, have no reality of their own, and one is as good as another so long as the reference is kept clear. We could cite as a good example the development, in recent years, of an international system of traffic signs. Symbols, on the other hand, not only point beyond themselves to something else, as signs do, but they also participate in the reality to which they point: 'The flag participates in the power and dignity of the nation for which it stands.' Symbols open up 'levels of reality which otherwise are closed for us', they cannot be produced intentionally, they grow and they die.[2]

The devotees of all religions believe in the reality of their symbols in varying degrees. The question then becomes, Can *different* symbols, if they do indeed participate in the reality to which they point, point to the *same* reality?

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1 St. John 18. 38.

2 Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*: Harper and Brothers, New York (1957), pp. 40-43.

This question is answered 'yes' by the group of believers whom we are discussing, those who say, 'There is some truth in all religions, and enough to enable the sincere follower to reach the common goal of all.' Whether the symbol considered be a creed, or an image, or a ritual (including the simplest acts performed as religiously significant), it partially participates in reality attainable by all, and partially is what it naturally is in itself. As the latter, it can be exchanged for something else which, for one of another faith, may equally well act as the conveyer or mediator of that aspect of reality which is involved. This is the meaning of Gandhiji's statement that the Bhagavad-Gītā was of supreme spiritual worth to him, but if all copies were destroyed and his memory of it inadequate, Christ's Sermon on the Mount would be an adequate substitute.

This interpretation of common truth in different religions is extremely important, but I think that it implicitly involves a second meaning of 'truth' which it is profitable to clarify explicitly. We have been talking about the truth of ideas and words. Now let us turn to talk that which is explicitly about one to whom these ideas belong and who uses the words.

Martin Buber, the late Jewish religious philosopher, has said, 'In some periods, that which men "believe in"...is a reality with which they are in a living relation, although they well know that they can form only a most inadequate representation of it. In other periods, on the contrary, this reality is replaced by a varying representation that men "have" and therefore can handle...Men who are still "religious" in such times usually fail to realize that the relation conceived of as religious no longer exists between them and a reality independent of them, but has existence only within the mind—a mind which at the same time contains hypostatized images, hypostatized "ideas".'[3] Loosely, we could say that an inverse analogy is the Vedantist who spends his life in the purpose of *realizing* what he knows to begin with. This is, of course, a slightly different usage of 'realization' than that in which we speak of a 'realized man' but it is nevertheless a related meaning.

The relation which Buber characterizes as 'religious' is one which involves men as entire persons—their thoughts, feelings, wills. The important point intellectually is not the degree of adequacy in their *thinking* about Reality (or God) but whether this thinking is pervaded by this *personal relation* to Reality. The question of feeling does not concern the adequacy of an idea about the object of feeling (Reality or God) but whether the feeling is *appropriate* to one whose feeling has Reality or God as its object. Is God the appropriate object of pleasant contemplation or the object of one's entire passion ? The question of will is not one of allotting to God a suitable portion of one's time, but the complete submission of his entire life to God, in a commitment in which there is no bargaining element—no question of reward in this life or hereafter.

But man is a metaphysical animal. He has a built-in thirst for intellectually conceiving and imagining the nature of Reality of which he is a part. *All* of his experience is subjected to a scrutiny with the question: What lies beneath or beyond these various experiences of life ? Whether consciously or not, he philosophizes ; he forms, with more or less originality or, in most cases, with complete submergence in the thought forms of his tradition—he forms ideas, pictures of the nature of God and man's relation to Him. This is inevitable. But it also involves a tragic tendency of human nature —to substitute ideas for the reality. And

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[3] Martin Buber, *The Eclipse of God* : Harper and Brothers, New York, (1952) , p. 13.

then the question comes, 'Are his ideas true ?'

I suggest that this question is relatively subordinate to another question which has to do with the person *himself*. We know (or think we do) what we mean when we say that one's *ideas* are true or false. Is there a sense in which we can say that the *person himself* is true or false ? This seems on the surface to be an incorrect use of the word 'true'. Let us analyse this.

Sören Kierkegaard, the father of modern existentialism, has pointed the way out of this difficulty in his broadside attack against the degenerate Christendom of his day in its substituting the husks of ideas for the kernel of *Existence*—not existence in the sense in which a stone *is*, but in the sense in which a *man* exists if he is truly a self and not, to use his own figure, a 'walking stick'. This involves a different conception of truth which Kierkegaard sets forth in a seldom read and much misunderstood chapter, 'The Subjective Truth, Inwardness ; Truth is Subjectivity'. The misunderstanding is due to missing two things: (1) Kierkegaard's distinction between truth as it is involved in science and history, where facts are open to objective, empirical investigation, publicly verifiable, and truth as it is involved in religion, in which the object of inquiry lies beyond the phenomenal realm ; and (2) his transition from the adjective 'true' to the adjectival phrase, 'in the truth':

> '*When the question of truth is raised in an objective manner, reflection is directed objectively to the truth, as an object to which the knower is related. Reflection is not focussed upon the relationship, however, but upon the question of whether it is the truth to which the knower is related. If only the object to which he is related is the truth, the subject is accounted to be in the truth. When the question of truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship ; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true.* Let us take as an example the knowledge of God. Objectively, reflection is directed to the problem of whether this object is the true God ; subjectively, reflection is directed to the question whether the individual is related to a something *in such a manner* that his relation is in truth a God-relationship...
>
> The existing individual who chooses to pursue the objective way enters upon the entire approximation process by which it is proposed to bring God to light objectively. But this is in all eternity impossible, because God is a subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness.'[4]

Philosophically it is useless to appeal to the experience of those who have 'directly perceived' God. On any count, such men are rarities even if the whole known duration of human history is taken into account. In any case their experience is not our experience, and we must have an answer to *our* cry for truth which is available to us *now* when we face our own human situation in which the nature of Reality involves not only uncertainty but, in the thinking of many of us, the inadequacy of human intellect, now or ever, to grasp the essence of the divine.

It is here, as we have seen, that Kierkegaard turns his attention away from the relation between the subject's *idea* and its object and fixes it, instead, on the *relation* between the entire person and Reality ; the vital question now becomes, Is the *relation* in which the individual stands, in truth a 'God-relationship' ? If it is not, he is not 'in the truth' even if he should happen upon true ideas. For now it is not a matter of ideas but of one's very existence itself.

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4 Sören Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* Princeton University Press, Princeton, (1941), p. 178.

Kierkegaard is very sure of the character of this God-relationship : it is that of absolute passion. 'Passion' signifies 'undergoing', or being acted upon—the opposite of action, in which the subject is the doer. It is doubtful if Kierkegaard fully appreciated this 'undergoing' character of passion, but what he has to say comes to the same thing: a state in which one's entire being is under the control of his thirst for true Existence, which is accessible only when one is consciously aware of the grounding of his existence in transcendent Reality.

To sum up : In this mode of thinking, the question of truth as a property or character of statements regarding religious Reality has given place to the question of the God-seeker's 'state of being'. It is 'Is *he* "in the truth" ?' not 'Are his *ideas* true ?' The question of the validity of religious statements has given place to what later (partial) followers of Kierkegaard in the development of existentialism have called the question of 'authentic existence'.

No novelty is claimed for this point of view so far as the prophetic utterances of the great religious leaders are concerned. It is only an interpretation, in terms of modern existential philosophy, of a basic intuition of many seers of different creeds from ancient times to the present. But I know of no one of these great souls who not only recognized and preached this character of the truly religious life but made it a central, continually reiterated doctrine as did Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and his great disciple and apostle, Swami Vivekananda. Since the latter put his conviction into the form of his Master's teaching, I shall quote only from him.

> 'The second idea that I learnt from my Master, and which is perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion.... There never was my religion or yours, my national religion or your national religion ; there never existed many religions, there is only the one....
>
> To learn this central secret that the truth may be one and yet many at the same time, that we may have different visions of the same truth from different standpoints, is exactly what must be done.... This idea, above all other ideas, I find to be the crying necessity of the day.'[5]

Elsewhere in the same address and in many other places, Swami Vivekananda emphasized the complementary aspect of this point of view—that religion does not consist in words, in doctrines, in intellectual comprehension—it consists in *realization.* Putting these two strains together we find that the great apostle of Sri Ramakrishna, as did his Master, put central what is here called 'existential truth'—the truth which consists not in formulations of ideas but *in a state of being, of authentic existence, of being on the way to becoming a realized man.*

To conclude on a personal note : I am writing these words at Mayavati, in view of the great Himalayas. For the second time I am a guest of the Advaita Ashrama of the Ramakrishna Order. As a Christian, I can bear witness to the depth and strength with which the convictions of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, founder of the Order and of this Ashrama, prevail today.

Not only is adherence to different faiths not a hindrance to spiritual fellowship ; in a sense it enhances it. Ideas become secondary and the Reality which lies beyond all rational comprehension is the Ground of our oneness.

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5 *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda,* Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, (1963), Vol. IV, p. 180f.

A TRAVELLER LOOKS AT THE WORLD

(*Continued from previous issue*)

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Question: In 1945 Japan was a shattered nation in every sense. But today Japan is on the highest rung of prosperity. On the other hand, in 1947 India was at the height of her glory, yet today we are where we are. What do you think are the reasons for this moulding of the destinies of the two nations in two different ways?

Answer: The reasons are three. They lie with the people themselves. The Japanese are a highly disciplined nation. They love work, hard work. They talk very little. They spend little energy in expressions of emotion. I have rarely seen the Japanese quarrelling in the streets or shouting at each other. Now, due to the political troubles, there have come hatred and some amount of street fights. But they are always a silent people, a hard-working people; whereas in India we waste a lot of our emotional energy in shouting and talking and frenzy and have not learnt to discipline our emotions and direct their energies to calm, silent, useful work, which is what Vivekananda defined as personality efficiency.

Secondly, we have become a sleepy nation. The philosophy we adopted had the effect of putting us to sleep, of making us lazy. In the lectures I often used to quote two lines of a German poet the sentiments of which struck me as particularly true of our people since recent centuries: 'Sweet is sleep; death is better; but it is best never to have been born.' That is the state from which Swami Vivekananda worked hard to rescue us. Accordingly, we are slowly getting awakened to that sense of manliness and strength and the capacity for work so characteristic of the German and the Japanese peoples particularly, and Western peoples generally. When we develop this we shall surpass many others because we are not wanting in intelligence. We have only to make it creative and give it a social direction. It is far away yet. Our people are sleepy even when they take a spade and work in the fields or a pen and work in the offices. That is why we are not highly productive, whether in the offices, fields, or factories.

But the Japanese, even if it be young girls or boys, are very hard-working, never waste energy in noise or talk. They have concentrated minds. When I was addressing a women's college near Tokyo in 1958, hundreds of girls were sitting in front of me on the floor in the Japanese way, with their legs bent backwards and sitting on their haunches. During an hour and ten minutes of the lecture and its translation into Japanese not once did I see them changing position or turning their attention here and there. They have learnt to discipline their bodies and minds. That is true education by which they get a training of their minds and not the stuffing of the brains as we do in our education in India. And the Japanese are lovers of beauty and orderliness as well.

In India, when you address a group of students or even grown-ups, if only a bird passes nearby, the audience will automatically be drawn to that bird and forget all about you and your lecture. A mere bird can snatch away our mind because we have no discipline in concentration, in the training of the mind. For us education is more often not training of the mind but stuffing of the brain; there in Japan it is different. And the fruits also are different accordingly.

Thirdly, Japan has had a great advantage

in the post-war years. She had to spend nothing on defence; America spent millions of dollars on Japan's behalf. And Japan made capital out of this particular situation. But this situation is changing now. Japan is slowly being forced by circumstances to assume her defence responsibilities herself. But by now she has come to the highest level of production in industry and agriculture. In shipbuilding she has beaten even England and America. Nearly twenty million tons she builds every year. That is a sign of national efficiency. The character of a people is the product of their philosophy.

But I have no doubt that the new philosophy that Swami Vivekananda has given us will transform the Indian scene. Really and basically it is just an expansion and development of our own traditional *Gita* philosophy. But this fruition will take some time. We have so much of the dead weight of the past to overcome. Then only will the new ideas take root and fructify. This is bound to come. This modern age in Indian history is meant to make us efficient in every sense. This is the meaning of Swami Vivekananda's constant emphasis on man-making religion and man-making education.

Question: Do you think that the American occupation has done some permanent damage to the civilization of Japan? If so, what are the chances of Japan's overcoming those ill effects?

Answer: Japan is in a peculiar situation today. In fact, during my talks to groups in Japan, I had occasion to refer to this. Japan and England are in almost similar situations today, though the position of Japan is much more complex. Post-war Japan has yet to discover its mission in the modern world. With its defeat in the Second World War, the whole thought-world of Japan completely collapsed. Her traditional ideals, aspirations, and scale of values received a tremendous jolt. The nation does not know what its place is in the altered world situation. There is a groping to find this out. There is a search for the abiding elements of its national tradition and what part she is to play in the completely altered world situation. And I am sure that with its undiminished vitality and dynamism, Japan will discover it and become a positive international force before long.

It is here that India's contribution will play a great part in Japan's future. A new philosophy of man is needed there that will reorient the tremendous energy resources of the Japanese people. Following in the wake of the colonial powers of the West, they were used to destroy other nations politically, commercially, and even by military force. That whole energy needs to be directed to human ends within and without the nation, bringing happiness and welfare to the backward sections of the population. But it needs the stimulus of a philosophy that treats man above his physical dimension, his organic limitations. That is what Vedanta will bring to Japan. Already in Japan there are people who are responding to the Vedantic message, especially the younger generation who read the books of Swami Vivekananda increasingly being published in the Japanese language.

This will be one more 'conquest' of Vivekananda, besides his 'conquest' of the West. Strength will come to the people from his great teaching of man's spiritual nature, a strength coupled with gentleness and compassion. During my speech at the Waseda University of Tokyo in 1958—it is a huge university of thousands of students—I had said, 'You tried to conquer America; but America conquered you. India is going to "conquer" America and Japan also in a different way.' 'Yes, you may succeed as well' the students had said.

'Yes', I had gone on, 'but India will "conquer" through spiritual ideas, through love—that is India's way of conquest. And we are going to "throw bombs" on you also in Japan; they will be "bomb" of books and ideas, and of nothing else. They are more powerful than atom and hydrogen bombs, but life-giving, not life-destroying.' The students had then responded: 'You throw such bombs on us and we shall be very happy.' This process is going on since then. It will gather strength as decades pass.

England is in the same difficult position. The education of the English child for the last two hundred years in its public schools and universities was to make him or her a ruler of the world. Today that world is gone along with that imperial mission. Today England does not know what its mission is in the completely altered post-war world. There was a series of talks over the B.B.C. just a few years ago in its Reith Memorial Lectures. The speaker referred to this problem while dealing with the theme of *Britain Today*. And he said that Britain was in search of its new mission in the post-war era. In the meantime there is the vacuum. And most of the ailments of the British body politic today arise from this ideological vacuum. When the old world-mission was there, everything in Britain had gone off smoothly; but with that secure base shattered due to the loss of empire, the nation finds its outgoing energies recoiling on itself. This gives rise to social tensions and troubles. Vivekananda had said even with reference to India, that much of her internal problems arose from not seeking and finding a healthy channel to express her national energies outside during the past few centuries. He was the pioneer to cut such a channel and give India back the awareness of a world-mission in tune with her historically acquired capacity and individuality.

We have had no foreign policy for centuries. We must have one now—an active and positive one. What is a positive foreign policy for India? Not destroying other people, not aggression, no, said Swami Vivekananda. But she is to disseminate her tested spiritual and philosophical thought abroad. That is something vital; and live them at home; preach them abroad. During this world tour, I saw the truth of this statement of Swami Vivekananda. Since attaining our political independence in 1947, we have increasingly sought help from the outside world for our own economic development; but we did not give to the world in the required measure what we have and what the world expects from us. Taking and not giving, is what constitutes beggary; and today other nations look down on India as a beggar. Some of the references to India which I came across in New Zealand and other countries depict conditions in India as worse than, say, in war-torn Biafra in Nigeria. I have heard of Indians being greeted sometimes in the streets of these countries by passers-by with the remark: Oh, you are from India; here are a few cents for your poor people.

We are seeking and getting aid from various countries; there is no harm in that. We do need economic aid, scientific aid, technical aid from the developed world. Vivekananda asks us to sit at the feet of other nations and learn what they have to teach us. We are also helping other developing nations according to our strength through the Colombo Plan. But we have something else of vital value to share with the rest of the world. As soon as that is grasped, the situation becomes changed. We have no political message to the rest of the world; we are at the receiving end in this field. But we have much to give in the field of philosophy and spirituality. This was convincingly demonstrated by Swami Vivekananda as the unique field of our dynamic foreign relations. Throughout

India's long history one of the important constituents of her foreign relations was the spread of her philosophical and spiritual ideas abroad. And today this work is so relevant, in that the rest of the world also seeks them. The Government of India is slowly realizing this.

This is how, I am sure, the whole scope of India's foreign relations will become crystallized as the decades pass by. This is on the lines shown by Swami Vivekananda. We need diplomatic relations, commercial relations, cultural relations, and all other types of socio-political relations with the rest of the world. But we need to forge another relationship with the rest of the world. That is the unbreakable bond of spirituality. This can issue only from the rational, universal dimensions of India's culture and experience. Its work is the bringing of modern humanity close together in peace and harmony. That is the perennial Vedantic contribution. India did it through Buddha for the whole of Asia in the past. And today she is called upon to render this service to the whole world in the wake of what she did through Vivekananda at the close of the nineteenth century. When this is grasped by our nation today, it will regain its self-respect and faith in its own destiny, and this will have a wholesome impact on her developmental efforts in the domestic field as well.

I was received with honour and love all over the world. That was because I represented that *Eternal India,* that India which has something precious to give to the world and to her own children. This is Swami Vivekananda's gift to the Indian people, a clear concept of India's external relations. We do not interfere with the policies of any nation. When China became free and politically strong, she started interfering politically in the affairs of other nations. England did so. America did so. Even now they are doing so. That is their national individuality. India does not and cannot do this because her national individuality lies in another field. We have no political message to the rest of the world. In that field we are at the receiving end. It is time we grasp this arresting truth glaring at our face. Then we shall seek and find our national individuality and what it means to the world. When Alexander the Great came to India, he became fascinated with India's philosophy. More than one Greek historian refers to this fact. So it has been with others from their nations in history. And so it is even today.

Addressing American university audiences I had often said that their country was discovered as India by Columbus. Even after the mistake was recognized, the native people of America continued to be called Indians. I asked the American students to continue the exploratory voyage of Columbus and discover the real India for themselves. I referred to the poem 'Passage to India' written by one of their great poets, Walt Whitman. 'India is a vast continent, geographically as much as ideologically. There is a whole continent of thought in India which it is up to you to explore ; and Swami Vivekananda came to you to give you a taste of the excitement in store for you from that exploration', I told them.

And today America and other parts of the world have set their course on this momentous voyage of exploration.

(To be continued)

PASSION TRANSFORMED

SWAMI CHETANANANDA

Energy in man is like a swift-flowing river. If anyone erects a big barrage to reserve the water of a turbulent river, for the time being he may succeed. But in the long run, either the water will overflow—if the river cannot burst the barrage—or will take a side-course for its exuberant flow. When the energy in man moves towards the satisfaction of carnal desires, it is called lust; on the other hand, when it is checked and allowed to flow towards God, the same energy becomes divine love. The same force is acting; the difference is in its direction. And everything depends on the man who directs it.

Indian lore is full of beautiful episodes from the lives of saints where one can find illustrations. They are the living lessons which help us overcome the turmoil of Māyā and transform worldly attachment into transcendent love. In the lives of Vilvamaṅgala and Tulasīdāsa, we witness such transformation. They are shining examples which speak for themselves. The events are so touching and colourful that they leave an indelible mark on our mind. Here such an episode in the life of Tulasīdāsa, the medieval saint of India, will be retold.

Tulasīdāsa (A.D. 1497-1623) lost his parents when he was very young. There was none to tend the orphan boy. The tradition goes that a maidservant came forward to nurse the boy and that She was Mother Durgā Herself. Anyway, Tulasī grew up and went to a Rāmāyat saint, named Naraharidāsa, at Citrakūṭa, for education. Having completed his education, he came to visit his parental home. The good neighbours cordially received the learned young man. They were reluctant to let Tulasī go and advised him to marry and settle down there. Bridal offers came from all quarters; so at last Tulasī, though unwillingly, gave his consent and got married.

The bride's father was charmed to see Tulasī's scholarship and devotion. The bride, Ratnāvalī, was as beautiful as she was good, and Tulasī was completely captivated by her sweetness and charm. He also proved himself a devoted husband. He loved Ratnā so much that if she were a single moment out of his sight, he would become restless with an agony in his heart. Gradually he became completely infatuated.

But everything has a limit in this world. Violent delights have violent ends. Fire and powder, when they meet each, consume themselves completely.

One day when Tulasīdāsa had gone to a neighbouring village for work, Ratnāvalī's brother came to visit her, and she left with him for her parental home without her husband's permission. Formerly, when Ratnāvalī had been invited by her parents, Tulasī had refused her permission out of extreme attachment. At that time in India, girls were married at a very young age, and naturally they were rather fond of their parents. They would feel more free at their parental homes than at their fathers-in-law's where they had some restrictions. So young Ratnā did not miss the chance to see her kith and kin after a long time.

On his return home, finding his beloved absent, Tulasī was very much upset. The pangs of separation were unbearable. After making inquiries of the maidservant and obtaining the necessary information, he crossed the river at night and reached his destination. He called loudly and knocked hard at the door of his father-in-law's. In the dead of night, Ratnāvalī awoke and, recognizing her husband's voice, opened the door for him.

The mind of man works in mysterious ways. Nobody knows what happens on account of what. Sometimes harsh, biting words cannot disturb the mind; at other times, a mild, sweet reproof can create a terrible upset. Anyhow, Ratnāvalī was a bit disturbed and ashamed to see the unbecoming manner of her husband. She mildly reproached him:

> Don't you feel ashamed
> That you have followed me here?
> Fie on your love, my dear!
> If this your devotion to my frame
> Of skin and bone were given to Rama,
> The fear of the world, you would surely overcome.

These words of Ratnā pierced Tulasī's heart like an arrow. What force was in them! Instantly Tulasī's lust was transformed and his dormant spirituality aroused. Binding attraction turned into burning dispassion. Then and there, at the gate of his father-in-law's house, he turned on his heel. Ratnāvalī's brother tried to pacify him but to no avail.

In anguish, Tulasī suddenly remembered the words of Naraharidāsa, his guru:

> If you have your spiritual welfare at heart
> And wish to realize God,
> Keep away from woman and gold,
> Says Narahari.

After leaving the house of his father-in-law, Tulasīdāsa came to Prayāg, had a bath for purification at the holy confluence of the Gangā and the Jamunā, and took the vows of Sannyāsa. Tulasī, with all his energy, started to turn the wheel of his life in another direction. People were startled to see his severe austerity. In time he had the vision of Rāmacandra.

The biographers of Tulasīdāsa have depicted very beautifully the circumstances of his God-vision. According to the instruction of the great devotee Hanumān, Tulasī was waiting for Śrī Rāma with sandal-paste at the busy bathing ghat at Citrakūta. Suddenly Śrī Rāma, disguised as a handsome young boy, came before Tulasī and said: 'Bābā, give me some sandal-paste.'

Tulasī was overwhelmed with joy and drank in, with unwinking eyes, the enchanting beauty of Rāmacandra. The Lord again asked for the sandal-paste, but Tulasī was in an ecstatic mood: he could neither speak nor move. The Lord then bent down, took a little paste with His own finger, applied some to His own forehead as well as Tulasī's, and disappeared. Thus Tulasī was blessed by God Himself.

Ratnāvalī, the sweet wife of Tulasīdāsa, could not forget her beloved husband. She kept track of him. Once she wrote a letter:

> Of slender waist
> And golden skin
> Am I.
> With women comrades
> I live secure.
> My heart may burst,
> I don't fear.
> But I do care
> That you may be caught
> By other damsels fair.

Tulasīdāsa replied in the following words:

> Devotion's sweetness
> I have tasted,
> Through the teachings
> Of my wife.
> With matted hair
> I live, secure
> In Rāma's love alone, my life.

This correspondence was in *dohas*, small Hindi couplets. Their poetic beauty is beyond description.

Ratnā's doubts about her husband were dispelled. She was fully satisfied and prais-

ed the devotion and renunciation of her husband. Amongst the wise, some said that Ratnāvalī was Sarasvatī, the Goddess of wisdom; while others said that God had spoken through her to destroy the delusion of His favourite devotee. The fascinating story of Tulasī and Ratnā does not end here. The story continues.

Many years had elapsed and a curtain of forgetfulness had fallen between the two souls. Tulasī had aged. His old memories had been completely erased by the repeated remembrance and overwhelming visions of Rāma. Though a pilgrim of God like Tulasīdāsa is himself a mobile holy place, yet he had a desire to see his Chosen Ideal, Śrī Rāma, in the places of pilgrimage. He started his journey. On the way, by chance and unknowingly, he became a guest at his father-in-law's house. Ratnā, who was no more young, came to receive the holy guest. Neither Tulasī nor Ratnā could recognize each other. She arranged his food, but Tulasī refused to partake of it as he was strict in his rules. He himself started to cook his own food. After a short time, Ratnā recognized her beloved husband, but she did not disclose the fact. On the contrary, she carefully concealed her emotion.

Again the sweet game started. Ratnā mischievously asked: 'Sir, shall I bring a chilli for you?' Tulasī replied: 'Thank you, madam; I don't need it. There is one in my bag.' She asked him to have this and that, but Tulasī's reply was negative. Ratnā wanted to wash his feet but Tulasī did not allow her. Night came. Ratnā passed a sleepless night. She was thinking deeply of her saintly husband. Her mind was turning over this thought: How was it that her husband had renounced the vital things of life, but still could not give up trivial things?

Next morning Ratnā asked: 'Sir, do you recognize me?' Tulasī: 'No.' Ratnā again asked: 'Do you know where you are?' Tulasī gave a negative reply. Then Ratnā disclosed her identity and sought to remain in his company. Tulasī flatly refused her request.

Ratnā saw that Tulasī was carrying in his bag *gopī-candana* (sacred yellow earth of Vrindaban) and camphor for his daily worship. This suggested a way to tease him. If he could carry these accessories with him, then, she asked, why not a humble woman? She insisted that either he carry her along with him in his bag or depend on discrimination and renunciation alone.

This was the last blow for Tulasīdāsa. He admitted that his wife was wiser than himself. Immediately he got rid of the few articles he possessed, giving the bag to a Brāhmaṇa. It is said that Tulasī did not forget his debt to Ratnāvalī. In an indirect and subtle manner, he tried to convey his gratitude to her through the women characters of *Rāmacaritamānasa,* his *magnum opus,* the famous Hindi version of the Rāmāyaṇa.

Lust brings bondage, love brings freedom. Lust springs from body-consciousness and love from God-consciousness. The deluded people cannot discriminate between lust and love. Discrimination is the beacon of spiritual life. Ratnāvalī (literally, a garland of gems) is for ever blessed that she was the cause whereby divine nectar, through the *Rāmacaritamānasa,* was sprinkled over the people of India.

Sources: *Viśwakoṣa* (in Bengali), Vol. VIII
Compiled by Sri Nagendranath Basu.
Tulasīdāsa by C. K. Handoo
Published by Orient Longmans, 1964, Calcutta.

INDISCIPLINE IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS—ITS CAUSES AND REMEDIES

Sri Kailas Chandra Kar

Discipline is the first condition of being. The whole creation, from the vast solar system to the minutest atomic world of proton, electron and neutron, owes its existence to discipline in the shape of observance of certain rules enjoined by the Creator. 'A stern discipline pervades all nature', says Spencer, 'which is a little cruel that it may be very kind.' Man is a part of nature and so stern discipline is the rule of his life for his ultimate good and happiness.

Again, in the case of man discipline is an internal or mental process rather than external, for all his outward behaviours are conditioned and governed by the workings of his mind.

According to Hindu philosophy, life is a continuous whole from birth to birth. So when a man is born, his mind is not a *tabula rasa,* for, as the *Bhagavad-Gītā* has it, his soul carries with it the instincts and aptitudes of its previous existence. These instincts and aptitudes which constitute human nature have to go through a course of discipline for their sublimation and unfoldment and this is what is meant by real education. Discipline is thus inherent in education. Without the former, the latter is all moonshine. Such being the importance of discipline, whenever it is found at a low ebb in any sphere of life, the position has to be carefully examined and means devised to put things in gear.

Unfortunately for our country, the time at present seems to be quite out of joint owing to a feeling of insecurity and despair engendered by the spirit of indiscipline rampant almost in every sphere of social and political life and in this essay it is proposed to deal with the most disquieting aspect of the situation, namely the spirit of indiscipline among students which is assuming alarming proportions in our educational institutions day by day.

Causes of Indiscipline

Without entering into a hypothetical and academic discussion regarding the causes of this indiscipline and unrest among students an attempt is made here for a factual analysis of the position in the light of my long experience as a teacher and first-hand knowledge of the state of things prevailing in the field of education in our country.

1. The fabric of social life has undergone a thorough transformation owing to the impact of modern materialistic civilization on traditional ideals with a consequent change in the standard of living as well as in the ways and values of life. As a result the parents (both father and mother) and other elders of the family are, more often than not, engrossed in securing their livelihood and have practically no thought for the mental discipline and moral development of their children who are simply encouraged to elect mammon as the sole object of pursuit. So the common run of boys and girls grow up only physically or at best intellectually and are denied the opportunities that their counterparts of the past had of forming wholesome *saṁskāras* or attitudes regarding the time-honoured values of life, emulating the patterns set by the elders of the family and hearing recitals made by them of accounts of noble characters like those of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata.* Old values are thus fast disappearing, but new ones are not being evolved to substitute them. The result is a vacuum and our young spirits are getting

dizzy in that void with no balancing influence to sustain them.

2. Morality consists in subordinating selfish propensities to considerations for others. Mere development of the intellect without the ballast of morality turns man into a monster all centered in self. But there is no provision for a regular course of positive moral instruction being imparted to the students of our educational institutions either to substitute or to supplement home training in this regard. Consequently their ethical sense cannot develop to the extent expected of useful and honourable citizens and their life's barge is left without moorings to restrain it from being carried away by the drift of impulses.

3. Education cannot thrive without co-operation between the student's home and the educational institution. But there is no relation between the two and even if there be any, it is rather critical and not co-operative. This offers scope for indiscipline to creep in among the students.

4. The benign influence of the teacher plays a very important role in the matter of education. But classes being generally unwieldy, close teacher-pupil contact is not possible and so there cannot grow up a strong bond of sympathy and affection between the teacher and the taught. This neutralizes the possiblity of the benign influence of the teacher on the students and reacts adversely on the moral behaviour of the latter.

5. In these days of hard economic struggle, the teaching profession with its poor emoluments does not generally attract capable hands and even those who take to it have to eke out their small income from other sources. Such teachers are not in a position, both physically and mentally, to devote themselves whole-heartedly to their sacred task. The result is slackness on their part, which naturally encourages indiscipline among students.

6. At present unwholesome outside influences on the students are many and various. Neither the teacher, nor the parent, but the man on the street is the student's guide and his emotional mind, unable to resist the heat of excitement caused by the ringleader, easily breaks away from the all too thin bond of teacherly influence that binds him to his Alma Mater and he dances to the tune of interested parties mostly political.

7. There being very little scope for vocational training, all students, irrespective of backwardness and dullness, rush for general education. Undeserved admissions and promotions have also to be given under pressure in a large number of cases. The failure of most of these students in completing the course successfully drives them to desperation and they swell the rank of disgruntled students. Even if they somehow get through the Secondary stage, they fail in the higher examinations and create trouble from a sense of frustration in life.

8. Intransigence on the part of the authorities of educational institutions in redressing the genuine grievances of the students is also sometimes responsible for alienating the allegiance even of good and loyal students and fanning the flame of student unrest.

9. Nowadays owing to a certain amount of laxity on the part of the authorities some students seem to be labouring under the impression that by main force they can have any demand acceded to, however unreasonable it may be, and they have the confidence that even if they fail in the attempt, they will get off with impunity. This is a hard fact and is, *inter alia,* largely responsible for the recurrence and spread of student unrest all over the country.

Remedies Suggested

1. Extensive propaganda through the press and the publicity department as well

as from the platform should be made to impress upon the parents and guardians the imperative necessity of seeing that their children and wards imbibe noble ideals and develop wholesome attitudes regarding the different values of life. This they can do by setting patterns for the children to imitate, through recitals of accounts of noble characters like those of the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* which are bound to leave their impact on young impressionable minds. This is their sacred duty and should not be ignored or avoided.

A thing oft-repeated finds an unconscious reception in the mind of the hearer and so I sincerely feel that prolonged propaganda in this regard is bound to have its effect.

2. Though according to the provision of the Constitution of this secular state religious instructions cannot be imparted in our educational institutions, there can be no objection to provision being made for the moral instruction of the students on the basis of a non-sectarian ethico-philosophic code as a set-off against the vacuum at home. With the rapid growth of indiscipline and corruption in all spheres of official and public life, have we not already begun to feel the evil consequences of the total absence of moral instruction from our educational institutions? This deplorable state of things must not go unchallenged. At all costs our students should be taught moral principles so that they may grow up to be useful citizens subordinating their self-interest to the greater interest of the society and the state.

This can be done through a regular course of positive moral instruction as suggested above, intended so to rouse the individual conscience of the students as it may rule all their social acts. The institutions run by the Ramakrishna Mission and some other Missions are doing good work in this respect. Morally instructive movies may also be usefully utilized for the purpose, for things acted before the eye are more appealing and effective than things read or heard. The institutions which can afford the expenditure should have their own projector. For others, the owners of cinema houses should be persuaded to offer opportunities. The students should, however, be weaned by the teachers and parents, as far as practicable, from films other than educative ones.

3. The parents and guardians should co-operate with the teachers for the one common end—the well-being of the student.

The headmaster and the teachers will do well to take the initiative in this respect by organizing parent-teacher Association.

In the perspective of the present disturbances it is incumbent even on colleges and universities to have an organization of this sort planned with necessary modifications and added provision for the representation of students.

4. In the secondary schools the teacher-pupil ratio should be brought down to 1:30 and every teacher should be placed in charge of the well-being of a certain number of students. In colleges and universities seminars and tutorials should be held frequently. These will ensure teacher-pupil contact to a remarkable degree and as a result of this contact the students will profit by the benign influence of the teachers.

5. The service condition of the teachers should be considerably improved in order that the best and most capable aspirants in life may take up the teacher's job in preference to other services and devote themselves whole-heartedly to their sacred task. My experience as a teacher for about two scores of years has convinced me that if the teacher is competent and works without distraction, being above ordinary wants, he can make even a defective curriculum yield good results and, by his alchemic touch, turn even refractory delinquents into refined and docile learners. But it is really dis-

appointing that even in independent India the powers that be are slow to realize this fact and the disposal of files and ordinary work of administration are given more importance than the making of future citizens and the shaping of the destiny of the nation.

There is no doubt that the implementation of these two suggestions will involve considerable increase in expenditure, but this has to be managed if education is to thrive and be effective. There is no reason why adequate funds cannot be provided for these purposes while billions of rupees are being poured into undertakings of lesser or even doubtful importance.

6. Given parent-teacher co-operation, adequate scope for teacher-pupil contact and a capable band of contented and sympathetic workers as teachers, no unwholesome outside influence will be able to penetrate and make any headway into an educational institution.

Residential schools are very useful in this respect and there should be a good number of such schools well distributed throughout each state. Hostels under proper supervision may also be set up for the benefit of the students reading in different schools or colleges of the same locality. Students reading in residential schools or residing in properly supervised hostels will serve as patterns to others.

7. Adequate provision must be made at all costs for the vocational training of backward students and dullards. If they be given the scope to choose their vocation suiting individual tastes and aptitudes, they will not have to suffer from a sense of frustration and will be imbued with courage and hope to fight the battle of life.

In the matter of promotion and admission of home-coached students the heads of institutions should not yield to any undue pressure. Though unpleasant at the moment, this will enable them to avoid a lot of worries and troubles in the long run.

8. The genuine grievances of the students should be considered with patience and sympathy and redressed with promptness and magnanimity by the authorities of the institution concerned. This will nip discontent in the bud giving the students a sense of security and a feeling of confidence in the authorities. If need be, the parent-teacher Association (suggested above) may step in to resolve the problem.

9. Unreasonable demands of misguided students should never be acceded to by the authorities concerned as such appeasement serves as an encouragement for greater trouble in future. In cases like this the student leaders may be summoned and the position may be explained to them with probable consequences. If it does not bear fruit, the help of the parent-teacher Association may be requisitioned. The teachers and parents can do a lot in this regard as, in the ultimate analysis, it is found that the most effective influence on the students is that of their teachers and parents. However unruly the students may be, they cannot generally ignore the moral persuasions of their teachers and parents and overlook their financial dependence on the latter. If, however, even the moral persuasions of the teachers and parents fail to have the desired effect, the misguided students forfeit all claim to sympathetic consideration and deserve to be promptly and firmly dealt with to prevent the recurrence and spread of such unjustifiable agitations. If a matter like this is allowed to drag on and drift, it leads to further complexities and newer developments.

To deal promptly and effectively with serious cases of student unrest, there may be set up in every state, by proper legislation, a standing Commission consisting of a High Court Judge as the Chairman, the Director of Public Instruction, one Vice-Chancellor, one College Principal and one

Headmaster as permanent members with provision for the co-option of the District Magistrate of the relevant District, and the M.L.A. concerned, at the time of the Commission's sitting over a case, as members for that session only. The procedure to be followed in the matter of preferring a dispute to the Commission should form a part of the legislation setting up the Commission. The Government should be bound by the same legislation to carry into effect the findings of the Commission and to take action against the party in default for a deterrent effect.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The questions and answers are from: 'M': *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras, 1964. References: Question 1, p. 171; 2, p. 117; 3, p. 5; 4, pp. 296-7.

The passage quoted in 'Onward For Ever!' is from: *The Complete Works,* Vol. IV, 1962, p. 17.

The *Mahābhārata* is likened to a lotus and the *Gītā* to its aroma. The Editorial tries to capture a little of that aroma whose main quality is the spirit of synthesis.

Dr. Jurij Zalokar, Head of Psihiatricna bolnica (Psychiatric Hospital) in Bejunge na Gor. Jugoslavija, contributes a thoughtful article on the necessity of taking into consideration man's spiritual dimension in catering to his psychological needs. The article is a shortened version of a paper he presented to the Third International Congress of Social Psychiatry, held in Zagreb, last autumn.

Sri G. S. Pathak, Vice-President of India, presided over the concluding function of the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Celebrations. We are presenting to our readers his address which is a devoted presidential homage to Swami Vivekananda. It is captioned 'Vivekananda and His Contribution to Human Thought'. The address is a beautiful summary of Swamiji's many-sided message.

'It is true he was friend of Gurudev,' said Gandhiji referring to C. F. Andrews in a speech, 'but he looked upon Gurudev with awe, not that Gurudev wanted it. Andrews had that peculiar humility. But with me, he became the closest friend.' This observation of Gandhiji gives us a good idea of the relationship that existed between Andrews and these two great Indians.

Charles F. Andrews loved and served India and humanity. 'Deenabandhu' 'Friend of the Lowly' was an apt title for this self-abnegating missionary of Christ. In 'Tagore and Andrews' Sri R. N. Bose, M.A., I.A.S., one of our old contributors, opens up a window on the intimate relationship that existed between Rabindranath Tagore and Andrews.

The article 'What is Truth?' by Dr. Clarence Shute of Department of Philosophy, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, U.S.A., is an interpretation, in terms of modern existential philosophy of the basic intuition of seers from ancient to modern times. He concludes: 'Ideas become secondary and the Reality which lies beyond

all rational comprehension is the Ground of our oneness.'

Question answered by Swami Ranganathananda at a Brothers' meet at Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, after his return from a long lecture tour of nearly one year and a half in 25 countries continues to be serialized here from the month of July 1970.

The elan vital in man can find its real fulfilment only in God. The life of Tulasīdāsa, the poet-saint of North India, is a glowing example of this truth. In 'Passion Transformed', Swami Chetanananda, a monk of the Ramakrishna Order, interestingly portrays the part played by Ratnāvalī in turning her husband's mind entirely godward.

Sri Kailas Chandra Kar is Retired Headmaster of Laban Bengalee Boys' High School, Shillong. His article analysing the causes and suggesting the remedies for indiscipline in educational institutions is written as a result of his long experience as a teacher. The problem of student unrest which has assumed alarming proportions needs to be tackled with understanding and promptness at various levels by all concerned—parents, guardians, teachers, leaders, school, State and students too—co-operatively.

REFLECTIONS ON SALEM DEMONSTRATION

The bizarre, anti-God demonstration at Salem, Tamil Nadu, on January 24 (see *The Hindu*, Madras, dated Jan. 26, '71, for a report), has whipped up a wave of anger and condemnation all over the country. Decent and devout countrymen felt deeply distressed and cut to the quick by the sight and reports of weird outrage committed on the likenesses of Hindu gods in the so-called atheist procession. Luckily there was no violent clash between the anti-God processionists and the opposing believers. Though such unholy demonstration of the sponsoring people are nothing new, what intrigued one was the cross-armed apathy, of the law and order authorities to what was potentially an explosive situation. In this country which is sadly cut up into warring groups and factions, it is obligatory on every responsible citizen to exert his utmost to reduce tensions and prevent violence and on the state Government to safeguard the constitutional rights of all citizens.

Although wounded feelings are likely to run high, restraint and clear thinking are called for under the circumstances. Śrī Rāma, whose image is reported to have been treated abominably, is no doubt the Darling of many of us, and insulting His image is sure to enrage us. But we should calmly consider that somebody's perverted concept of Rama and the real Rama are two different entities. If some people chose to insult their own concept of Rama, the real Rama is not touched or affected by that. Man can never insult God, he can only insult himself. For even to insult God, he must find Him. And when he finds Him he can only love Him. God either is, or is not. If there is God, antigodism is childish; if He is not, it is superfluous. Either way it can not be a preoccupation of any mature person. A sincere atheist also can be a decent and respectable person. He need not necessarily act in a low and offensive manner. If some of our people wish to cultivate atheism in India they are perfectly free and welcome to do so. But in trying to do so let them not degrade themselves. Let them cultivate atheism with dignity and refinement.

Such venting of atheistic gall as was wit-

nessed at Salem, is not new in our history. It has made its ugly appearance on and off. It has been recognized and accepted in our scriptures that people in general fall into two categories, those possessing divine qualities and others of opposite proclivities. While the former devotedly worship God in the Sāttvic way the latter hate God and react in the Tāmasic way. As nothing in this world can exist or happen without the express will of God, the atheists too exist and act in that way because God wills so.

If God did not will their existence, they would not be there on earth. And every creature has a relation to God.

As the popular story in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's life has it, Kālīya, the venomous snake in river Yamunā, poured poison on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. While devotees would rejoice to bathe the Lord in milk, Kālīya offered to God poison, what He had gifted him with! Devotees offer to God things they are fond of. So while worshipping with the five, ten, or sixteen items, the Lord is offered flowers, sandal paste, light and so on. The God-haters would use what they are fond of to 'worship' God in their own way. People may hate God; but God hates none. He can never be angry with His own children, however perversely they may behave.

Our scriptures recognize many modes of approaching God. If loving devotion is one way, fierce hatred is another equally efficient way. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam,* the wonderful scripture of Bhakti, Nārada says with stunning liberality:

> 'Therefore, through constant enmity, devotion, fear, friendship or lust one can approach God. By doing so one will ultimately see nothing but God.
>
> 'It is my unwavering conviction that even by Bhakti-yoga one will not attain such union with God as one would with constant enmity towards Him.'
>
> (VII. 1. 25-6)

Looked at this way the Salem demonstration assumes a different aspect. The atheists are welcome to hate and dishonour God. But there is danger ahead for them. A man, out of bravado, may thrust his hand into a blast furnace to prove that it does not burn. But the disastrous results are known to everyone. Are not the atheistic haters of God, specially of Śrī Rāma, walking right into His trap?

Let the devotees keep their heads clear and be patient. And let them rest assured that Śrī Rāma ordains things in this own inscrutable ways.

ERRATA

Read at the end of the first column, p. 49: 'in an all-too-brief span of life', and omit 'What the Swami says... span of life' in the second column, 19th and 20th lines.

P. 72, second column, 10th line; Read, 'in India at least twenty per cent, i.e. 108 million people'.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

BRAHMA-VIDYA RAHASYA VIVRITIH: BY SRI SACCIDANANDENDRA SARASVATI. Published by Adhyatma Prakasaha (Karyalaya, Holenarsipur Hassan District, Mysore State), 1969, Pages 18+138, Price Rs. 2.00.

Sri Saccidanandendra Sarasvati has been doing valuable work in Advaita, popularising the Vedantic texts in easily intelligible Sanskrit. The present text offers a lucid commentary on the eighth chapter of the *Chandogya Ppanishad*. This chapter is concerned with the Saguna and Nirguna aspirant, for he alone is eligible to grasp the correct meaning of the text. The Upanishads are couched in a language which has to be interpreted in the light of the principles handed down from generation to generation. As such a careful study of the text is not easy for one who knows merely the language. The author of the present text has offered a valuable commentary on the Bhashya of Sri Sankara. Every student of the Vedanta must read the book.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

VISUDDHA VEDANTA PARIBHASHA: BY SRI SACCIDANANDENDRA SARASVATI. Published by Adhyatma Prakasha Karyalaya, Holenarsipur (Mysore), 1969, Pages 16+132, Price Rs. 2.00.

In the Vedantic literature, as in that of any other system of Philosophy, there are many technical terms. A clear grasp of these technical terms and the techniques is essential. We have the *Vedanta Paribhasha* of Sri Dharmarajadhvarin. The author of the present work explains here the technical terms and methods employed in expounding the central tradition of the Vedanta. While Dharmarajadhvarin took up the consideration of the Pramanas, the present author takes up the basic problems like Brahman, Avidya, relation between Jiva and Isvara, Creation, Pramanas, Brahmatma bhava, Sravana-manana-nididhyasana, Akhandarta, and the place of logical reasoning. The book is not so much a Paribhasha, as a good introduction in Sanskrit to the Advaita Vedanta.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

ZOROASTER'S INFLUENCE ON ANAXAGORAS, THE GREEK TRAGEDIANS, AND SOCRATES: BY MR. RUHI AFNAN, Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y. 1969, pages 161, Price $5.

Dr. Afnan is not unknown to us. We have already read with considerable interest his books, *The Great Prophets* and *Zoroaster's Influence on Greek Thought*.

In addition to Foreword and Introduction there are six chapters dealing on Zoroaster, Medism, Euripides, Socrates, Thucydides and so on. Dr. Afnan has tried to prove that historically Greek centres of learning in Asia Minor were already influenced by Zoroastrian culture for quite some time in the past. He has also very ably demonstrated the great and at the same time basic similarities between Zoroaster's teachings and the philosophy of Anaxagoras.

The book helps us to have a better and a more complete understanding of Zoroaster's great contribution to philosophy and culture as also to what an extent he influenced contemporary thought. The lucid style and exposition make the book extremely readable and at the same time interesting.

Provided with a proper index it will be more serviceable.

We are confident that the book shall find a good reception from the reading public.

DR. PARESH NATH MUKHERJEE

NEWS AND REPORTS

UNITED CULTURAL INSTITUTE SALISBURY

NINTH & TENTH ANNUAL REPORTS COMBINED: UPTO 30TH NOV. '70

From 25th October '70, the Swami began his twelfth year of service. During the period under review he visited Lourenco Marques twice. On the first occasion he was given the privilege of laying the Foundation-stone of a temple dedicated to Mother Bhuvaneswari. Sri Lalloobhai Patel who donated two adjacent plots for it will bear the expenses of the construction. The plan has provision for an outhouse with rooms for resident priest, guests etc. On the second occasion the Swami was the guest of Sri Patel himself. During this visit a 'Yoga Camp' was organised for those who had earlier shown a desire for it. Friends from

Johannesburg and Bulawayo came to participate in it. The programme included devotional singing, talks on spiritual topics, and demonstration of Yoga postures. South Africa was also visited twice. Due to *visa* difficulties, each visit lasted only about a month. This prevented the Swami from visiting many important towns which wanted to welcome him as in previous years. On the first occasion coloured slides were shown in the few towns he visited. On the second occasion, in addition to holding discourses in Master Mansions and elsewhere, he laid the Foundationstone of the Lakshminarayana Temple in the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society's own site in Lonasia. He was also specially invited to consecrate three bronze images donated by a South Indian family to an important temple in Pretoria. Besides he took part in two 'Ramakrishna Children's Rally' programmes in Newcastle and Pretoria. *Visa* difficulties prevented the Swami from participating in the final function of Vivekananda Birthday celebrations held in January, '70, by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Lusaka. The Centre's two houses in Luanshya and one wing of the house in Mufulira fetched the usual income. In the second wing of the Mufulira 'All Saints Home', and in Lusaka, weekly Sat-sangs went on, as usual.

In Bulawayo the Ashrama is slowly gaining in usefulness. A number of well-attended meetings, and two 'Yoga Camps' were held during this period. For the 1st Camp 23 guests came from Salisbury. They were all accommodated in the different bedrooms of the Ashrama. The R. K. Youth League and Members of the local Women's Association gave their full support. Due honour was paid to Sri N. J. Patel, the Institute's first Treasurer, and the Swami's host in 1954, and ever since his 2nd visit to Rhodesia in 1959. In addition ot prayers, Yoga exercises etc., there were lectures by eminent people on Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Sufism, Theosophy, Buddhist Meditation and Bahaism. Excursions were made to important places and beauty spots, and one night was devoted to the showing of coloured slides on Yoga, R. K. Mission Centres, and Islamic places of pilgrimage. The 2nd Camp was also well attended. Guests gladly co-operated with Sri Nanubhai Naik and his group devoted to the improvement of the garden as a whole, and to the construction of regular steps to go down to the river. By turns, for about a fortnight, Mrs. D. Meyerson and Miss Ramola Keshav of Cape Town, Mrs. E. I. Weller and Miss Margerat Hatchell of Joburg, and Miss June Atkinson, Yoga teacher of salisbury stayed in the Ashrama and undertook intensive philosophic studies. Most of the first four contacted friends in Fort Victoria, and Salisbury, and went to Kyle Dam and Victoria Falls. The R. K. Youth League is now building up its own Library in one of the rooms of the Ashrama. It is hoped that the Ashrama with its beautiful position overlooking the river and many conveniences will become more a popular Study Centre and Spiritual Retreat as days pass.

When the Swami is in Rhodesia three weekly classes are held in Bulawayo,—in the sitting-rooms of Sri R. K. Vashee and Mooney brothers and in the Ashrama. Ordinarily the Swami travels by night train each week to hold his regular six classes in Salisbury,—in the houses of Sri & Smt. Voss, Sri R. N. Patel, Sri H. C. Desai, the Sineks, the Falks, and the Johnstones. Occasionally he also speaks at meetings held by local Yoga teachers. If he is unable to be present, most Salisbury classes are held by the organizers themselves.

The Institute's four houses in Salisbury and the Farm fetch the usual income. Most of this is collected by Syfret's Executor and Trust Company which advanced the loan to acquire the 4th house. By the end of '70 the loan will be reduced to £ 750,—a sum which can be repaid in about another year. There has been only slight addition to the books in the Library. For reference purposes during talks, some select books have been shifted to the Bulawayo Ashrama. In the matter of slides there has been substantial addition. Over 150 black and white slides were specially 'copied' from *Vivekananda in Pictures* and donated by Mr. D. Kidia of Gatooma. Coloured slides have been got from Mission Centres in London, Paris, Trichur, Trivandrum, and Khar. Friends have donated a few tapes of good devotional music. Sri Malladi Sriramamurty of Eluru, Andhra State. India, has sent us a fine collection of classical songs, and renderings of well-known pieces like 'Bhaja Govindam' and 'Dakshinamurty-Stotra',—sung by himself, accompanied by chosen friends on violin and Mridangam.

Immediate Needs: (1) Steps to make recurring income larger (2) Additions to the books in the Library, tapes, slides, etc. for cultural purposes.

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